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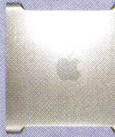
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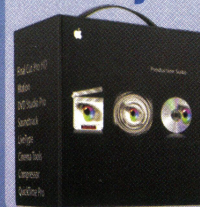
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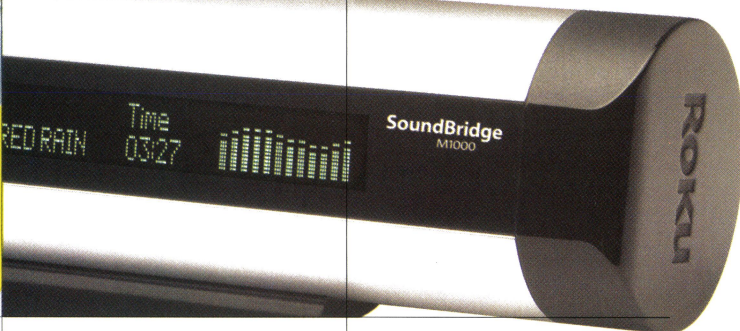
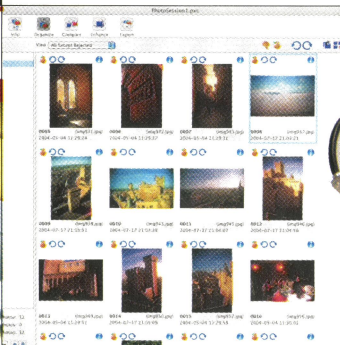
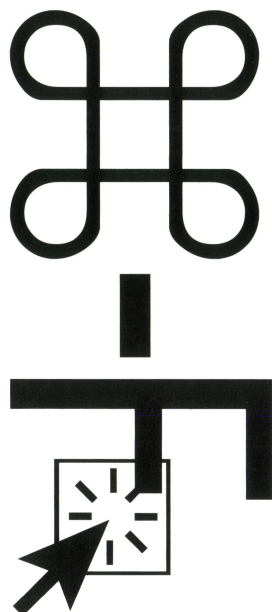
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Focus.

030

E-mail survival guide

By various authors.

E-mail was going to be the communication revolution. For many users it's become a burden and an impediment to productivity. Our handy guide shows you how to choose the e-mail program that suits your needs, how to make the most of its capabilities, and — most importantly — how to stop spam from ruining your life.

The Hub.

Music.

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Listening to music on your Mac's in-built speakers is like drinking wine through a straw. Check out some options for increasing fidelity with speakers, headphones and network solutions.

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Incompatible video standards limit what you can do with your iMove masterpiece. Don't be discouraged — we'll show you how to overcome.

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Ultra-powerful photo catalogues.

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Administer and repair a Mac remotely.

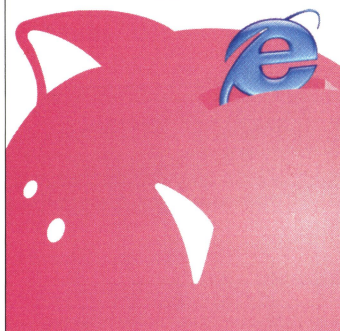
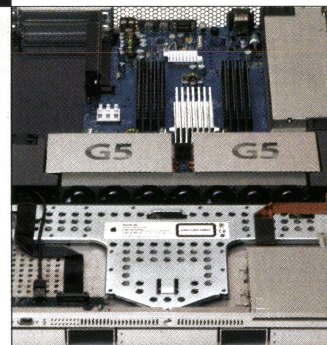
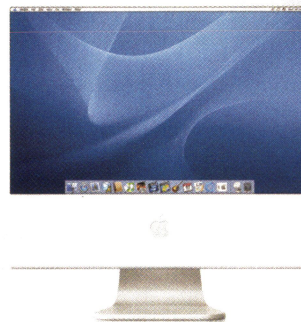
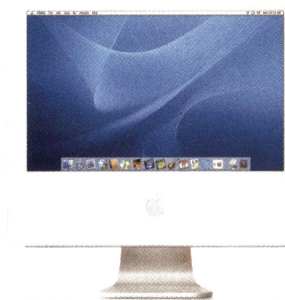
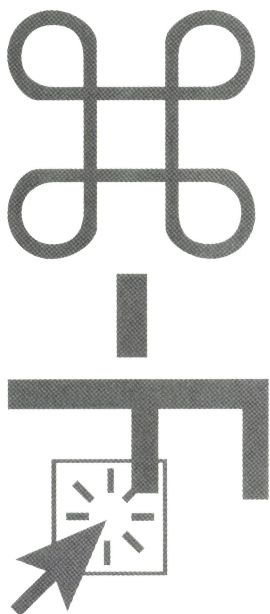
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Remote-control sysadmin.

Help folder.

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Tips and queries from our readers.



Buzz.

G5 comes home

021

The long-awaited G5 iMac was finally unveiled in Paris, bringing the next-generation PowerPC processor to a more reachable price point. The response has generally been favourable — but is it enough to revive the spirit of the original iMac?

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Faster low-end Mac holds its own

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Tonnes of functionality in 1U space

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Bigger and more compatible

VectorWorks 11

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Productivity and drafting improvements

Portfolio 7

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New version brings ease and flexibility

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Includes revolutionary changes but retains ease of use

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A simple system for organising and editing manuscripts

Digital Camera Link for iPod

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Transfer your photos on the go

Fourth-generation iPod

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Adopts click wheel, extends battery life

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New tools for 'toons

A



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From the Macintosh scene to the magazine.

By Matthew JC. Powell.

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Another Cube?

Prove me wrong.

TWO and a half years ago, in his keynote address at the San Francisco Macworld Expo, Steve Jobs unveiled the radical design of the iMac G4. The G3-based iMac had been revolutionary in its day and catapulted Apple to the forefront of computer industrial design. That design, though, had become a little long in the tooth – thanks in no small part to ill-conceived notions like “Blue Dalmatian” – and the pressure on Jobs and Apple to deliver a new revolution was intense.

The iMac G4 delivered. It was radical. It was distinctive. It was elegant. Its match of form and function made the translucent plastic of the G3 iMac seem opaque.

Jobs revelled in the machine's obvious success. So confident was he that the right design decisions had been made that he even went so far as to show off some of the design sketches that had been rejected, and explain why.

One of the designs incorporated a flat-panel display, mounted on a tilt, with the logic board directly behind the screen. That design was rejected, said Jobs, because it would have required mounting the optical drive vertically. Mounting an optical drive vertically, he said, reduced its performance by about 20 percent.

I was reminded of that keynote when I saw Phil Schiller, unveiling the iMac G5. There can be no doubt that this new iMac is an attractive machine, and an impressive engineering feat getting the G5 processor into an enclosure so thin. It gives the road warriors among us hope that maybe a G5 PowerBook is possible after all.

The thing is, it looks just like that rejected idea for the iMac G4. Like, almost exactly. Memo to Steve: if you're going to pull designs out of the bin, don't ever tell us they were in the bin.

What's more, it doesn't look revolutionary or distinctive either. It looks like a lot of the PC clones that followed the G4 iMac's lead (many of which were probably modelled after the sketch Jobs discarded two and a half years ago). It's a good, solid design, but not breathtaking in the way its predecessors were.

Then there's that vertically-mounted optical drive. Jobs never mentioned a 20 percent performance hit when he launched the G4 Cube with its vertical drive, and it seems to have been forgotten for this one as well (credit to Stephen Withers for pointing out that, since the iMac G5 isn't quite vertical, maybe you only lose 17 percent).

Someone at Apple explained to me that it's no longer the case because of “improvements in the design and technology of optical drives”. These must be some good improvements since, as

far as I know, the laws of physics haven't been revised in the interim and gravity still works the same way. Frankly, I'll believe it when I test it.

My biggest concern with the iMac G5, though, is its price. Where the original iMac represented a significant improvement in the attainability of Mac technology, the iMac G4 pushed the price much higher with its choice of flat-panel display. Despite great advances in manufacturing, flat panels are still more expensive than CRTs, and so the iMac G5 is not the Mac “for the rest of us” that the Bondi Blue jellybean was.

Rather, the “consumer” Mac is now the eMac, while the iMac brand has been pushed into the eerie mid-ground – too expensive for consumers, not expandable enough for professionals. That's where the Cube went to die.

Maybe there is a large market out there for “pro-sumers” or “con-fessionals” or whatever you want to call them. The Cube – though it certainly had its fans – didn't find them, and slowing sales of the iMac G4 in its final months suggested that it didn't either.

The G5 iMac is cheaper than the G4 iMac was – by as much as \$700 if you compare the top-end versions of both machines – and that plus the obvious performance gain should help it find some market. There is, however, still a \$600 gap between the most expensive eMac and the cheapest iMac. I suspect many people who are shopping in the price range of a 1.6GHz Combo-drive iMac G5 will look at a 1.25GHz SuperDrive eMac and opt to save the money. Sure, the iMac is a faster machine, but is it that much faster? Enough to justify the sacrifice of \$600 *and* a SuperDrive? Again, I'll test it and let you know.

Maybe I'm wrong. Maybe the G5 iMac will be a solid six-run out-of-the-park hit like the original iMac and finally silence the irrational people who think Apple should get out of computers and focus on iPods.

If it isn't a hit, the pressure will be on the team developing the G5 PowerBook like never before. Suddenly they will be the ones on whom Apple's reputation as a market leader will rest. Woe betide them if the G5 iMac has a disappointing first quarter and they're not able to deliver a product in the first few months of next year to counter it.

Time will tell. ☞

Matthew JC. Powell

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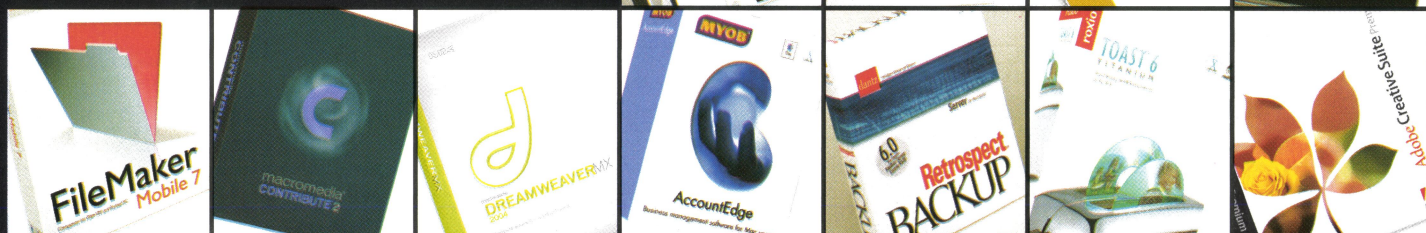


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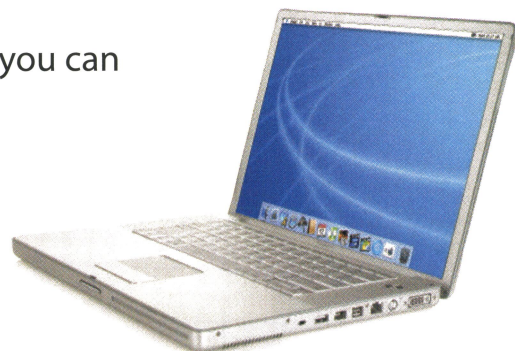


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For the next three issues, Conexus (02 9975 2799) will be giving away a pair of Mentor RCH100 professional surround-sound headphones valued at \$289 to the *Australian Macworld* reader who sends in the most interesting or provocative letter.

The headsets in the Mentor range surround each ear with six independent chambers, creating the sensation that each sound is coming from a different direction. This unique physical design distinguishes the Mentor range from attempts to imitate surround sound using software alone.

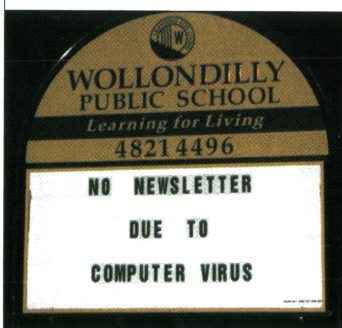
The Mentor headphones also include Safebass Technology, which protects the listener's ears by combining audio signals from the right-front and left-front audio channels and converging the bass signals into a more moderate level.

The Mentor range includes headphones that are designed for use with Macs and PCs and with DVD players, gaming consoles and digital TVs. They are available in the professional (330g) form factor for maximum comfort and sound separation, and in the deluxe (140g) form factor for maximum portability. The RCH-100 provides a built-in AC97 decoder, so you just plug it into your Mac's USB port. OS X is required. 📧

School of thought

■ This photo was taken in Goulburn NSW. Wollondilly Public used to be an Apple school — I wonder if they regret the switch?

Jack Brouwer
Goulburn, NSW



Colour blind

■ I've just finished the last page of my 09.2004 issue of *Australian Macworld* and had a chuckle at the last sentence of Alex Rieneck's Soapbox article. As I sit here in front of my black G3 PowerBook, I'm wondering what possessed him to write "Ever wondered why Macs are white?" I'll have some of what he's on thanks!

Roy Brandner
The Basin, Vic.

Alex was trying to make a humorous point about Apple making its computers white in order to overcome prejudice against them. — M.JC.P.

Letters should be e-mailed to matthew.powell@niche.com.au with a subject header of "Mailbox" or by post to *Australian Macworld* Mailbox, 3/165 Fitzroy Street, St Kilda, Victoria 3182. Letters of fewer than 200 words are given preference. We reserve the right to edit letters and probably will. To be eligible for the Mentor prize, you must include your full name and address, including state or territory.

Pining for the fjords

■ In your review of ArtMatic Voyager (Test drive, 08.2004), Bryce was described as "Corel's now-discontinued-on-the-Mac application". In fact, Bryce has recently been acquired by DAZ Productions (see "Hot links"). Latest version is Bryce 5 and runs on Mac OS 8.6 or later including X. Bryce is a great application. I love it.

Masato Niizeki
Carnegie, Vic.

Thanks for letting us know. I was unaware that Bryce had been revived, but I'm certainly glad to see it back. — M.JC.P.

The MacGyver method

■ Much as I admire Sean McNamara's construction of a 4.5V battery from old coat-hangers, chewing gum and string (Help folder, 09.2004), the fact is that the real (Rayovac "cube") article is available from Dick Smith for the princely sum of \$4.91. I bought one just the other day.

Steve Cooper
via internet

I had a look at my local Dick Smith and at the online site and couldn't find one, but it's good to know that persistence can pay off. Sean's solution still works, of course, if you're not lucky enough to find the real deal. — M.JC.P.

Still standing

■ I enjoyed reading your article regarding the long-standing developers in the Mac community (Buzz, 09.2004). Being a Mac addict and an Omnis developer, it's great to see Omnis getting a mention. At the recent OzOmnis conference (see "Hot links"), Gwyneth Gibbs gave us a presentation which included a slideshow of their "museum" of Omnis versions over the years, including the Omnis 3 packaging you showed in the article.

Omnis 3 still runs today on the modern Macs (albeit in Classic mode), which I believe is a testament to the stability of the application and the platform.

Paul Mulrone
Bentley, WA

Greener batteries

■ I am still using my beloved G4 TiBook for work and play, and it shows no signs of buckling under current demands. I would, however, like to make one request of Apple regarding its battery technology: make it recyclable.

I am on my second Li-ion battery and, as we all know, these have a limited lifespan.

While my original battery remains cased up I wondered recently whether it could be rebuilt. After all, the bank of cells within it are just "plain wrap" Panasonic.



Hot Links

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Australian Omnis developers

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However, a battery specialist in our area told me that to have it rebuilt would cost \$249 and it would have to be sent to Queensland. Given that some resellers have new ones on sale for \$219 I couldn't see the point.

Surely it would make Apple more visibly environmentally responsible if it had a battery recycling program. This would not necessarily translate for Apple into loss of sales for new PowerBooks, due to an increase in their working life. In fact, it would mean that older but functioning models would be more easily passed onto one's spouse or children, thus providing a tangible incentive to upgrade!

Mike Fuery
Wodonga, Vic.

Not far from the tree

■ Since it became clear that the iPod was a hit with more than just the Macintosh fraternity I have pondered a larger question: why are people buying the iPod and using iTunes when they have ignored Apple in the past?

I cannot help but wonder why the iPod buying hoards don't see a connection between the quality and the ease of the iPod and other Apple products. Surely it has occurred to them that if the iPod is well made and functional then so would other Apple products like OS X and the iMac.

If recent figures are to be believed, Mac sales are on the

up — but they are nothing like the figures of the iPod. You have to wonder why.

Even when you sit a Winteller in front of the Mac and show them all the things you can do — things that would reduce their PC to a crawl or a blue screen — they still just shrug their shoulders. "It's good, it's great, but I have a Windows box".

And that's it! They will not change, they will not seek to buy a computer that will replace their Virusbox just like they replaced their dust-collecting MP3 player for the iPod.

It's a mystery.

Wake up Wintel drones! The iPod is merely an example of the quality, the edge, the ease of use and the unparalleled functionality of The Mac.

Renny Willins
Theodore, ACT

Interesting argument, Renny. By not-dissimilar logic, the fact that I use (and quite like using) Microsoft Word means I ought to be equally impressed with Microsoft's operating system offerings, doesn't it? Mysteriously, I'm not. Do other readers have any thoughts on this conundrum? — M.JC.P.

Corrections

■ **Incorrect URL 1.** In our Test drive review of digital video converters (08.2004) we printed the wrong URL for Canopus Australia. It should have been www.canopus-aust.com.

■ **Another incorrect URL.** In our feature on accounting software (09.2004) we had the wrong URL for SapphireOne. That one should have been www.sapphireone.com.

■ **And the hat trick.** Our nostalgic piece on the early developers for the Mac platform last issue (Buzz, 09.2004) was undermined somewhat by printing the wrong URL for Omnis, which continues to this day to be developed for the Mac. Its URL is www.omnis.net.

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Associate Publisher

Grant Arnott
grant.arnott@niche.com.au

Editor

Matthew JC. Powell
matthew.powell@niche.com.au

National Advertising Manager

Dominic Miller
dominic.miller@niche.com.au
03 9525 5566

Designer

Joel Robertson
joel.robertson@niche.com.au

Cover Digital Imaging

Manfred Schmid
manfred.schmid@niche.com.au

Production Manager

Annie Darker
annie.darker@niche.com.au

Production Co-ordinator

Sandra Iskander
sandra.iskander@niche.com.au

Prepress

Manfred Schmid
manfred.schmid@niche.com.au
Emma Meagher
emma.meagher@niche.com.au

(niche):

Australian Macworld

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Tel: 03 9525 5566 / Fax: 03 9525 5628

Chairman and Publisher

Nicholas Dower

Managing Director

Paul Lidgerwood

Finance Director

John Clarke

Studio Design Manager

Keely Atkins
keely.atkins@niche.com.au

Subscription Inquiries

Free Call: 1800 804 160
subscriptions@niche.com.au

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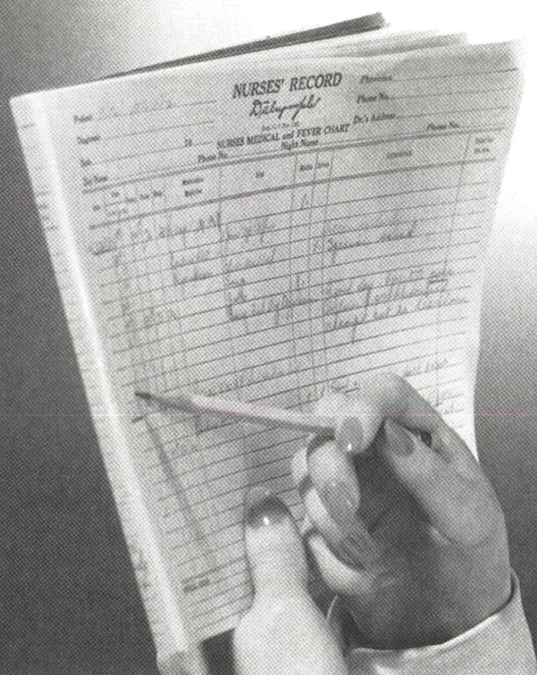
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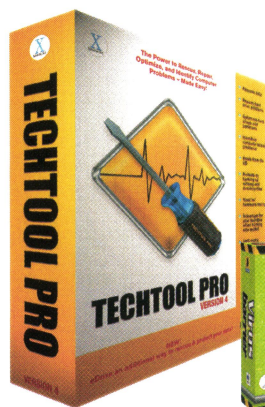
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Software review.

TechTool Pro 4

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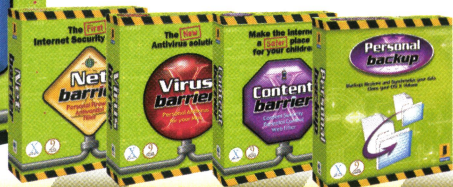
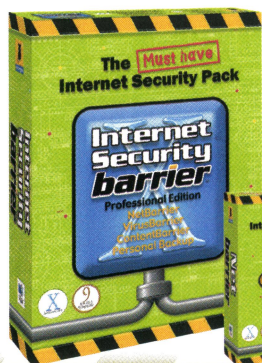


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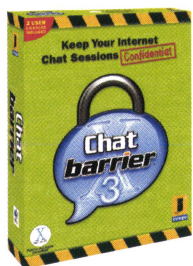
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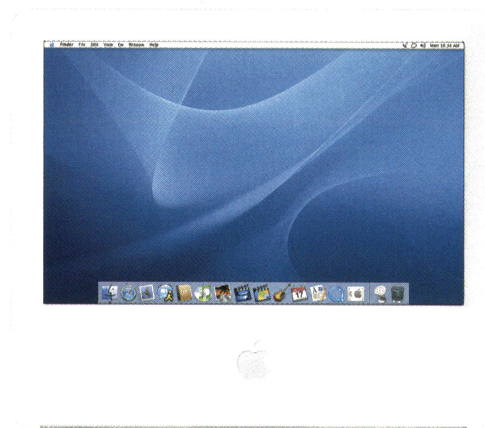
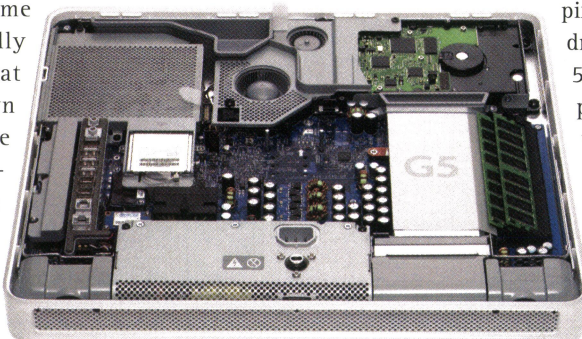
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www.apple.com/imac
Right to the source

iMac G5 wows Paris

APPLE'S senior vice-president of worldwide marketing, Phil Schiller, took a cue from his boss, CEO Steve Jobs, as he unveiled one more thing at the end of his keynote to kick off September's Apple Expo in Paris: an iMac G5 that includes the entire system inside a 17- or 20-inch LCD screen. Continuing the all-in-one theme that started with the original CRT iMac, the G5 edition features a new industrial design that does away with the hemispherical base of the previous generation all together. Schiller said that the new iMacs would be available in mid-September (as this issue went to press, Apple Australia confirmed it had shipped its first units to resellers).

All iMacs feature common traits, including a widescreen aspect ratio and a slot-loading optical drive built into the right-hand edge of the system. They come mounted on an anodised, centrally mounted aluminium pedestal that allows the system to tilt up and down from 25 degrees to -5 degrees. The systems also feature downward-firing speakers whose grilles are used to vent air into the machine; a rear vent on top displaces hot air. Apple says the new iMac operates at 25dB when idle.



Configurations. The new iMacs come in 1.6GHz and 1.8GHz G5 processor speeds, but all share a Front Side Bus (FSB) architecture and support for 400MHz DDR RAM. All the new systems also sport Serial ATA (SATA)-based internal storage and Nvidia GeForce 5200 Ultra graphics with 64MB of VRAM. The new iMac has peripheral connectors mounted vertically on their rear panels; the systems feature audio in, audio out – supporting analogue or digital output, much like Apple's AirPort Express – a mini-VGA connector, three USB 2.0 ports, two FireWire 400 ports, a 56K v.92 modem and 10/100baseT Ethernet. Support for 802.11g-based wireless networking is optional using an internal AirPort Extreme card, as is an internal Bluetooth interface.

The base 17-inch iMac G5 comes equipped with a 1440 x 900 pixel screen, 80GB 7200RPM hard disk drive, DVD-ROM/CD-RW Combo drive, 533MHz Front Side Bus and 1.6GHz processor, for \$2199. A 1.8GHz model, with a 600MHz Front Side Bus, is equipped with a DVD-R SuperDrive and costs \$2499. The 1,680 x 1050 resolution 20-inch model, sporting a 1.8GHz processor, 160GB 7200RPM hard drive and SuperDrive, costs \$3199. ● Brad Cook and Peter Cohen

■ IMAC G5

The market responds

ANALYSTS are unanimous in their support for the new iMac and the strategic ties Apple has drawn between the consumer desktop and the iPod in marketing the computer.

"From the company that brought you the iPod". The marketing campaign for the iMac G5 will leave no doubt in consumers' minds what else this computer company has delivered lately. "From the company that brought you the iPod" will be part of the message consumers will get when they see advertising for the iMac G5.

"It's meant to express a couple of things – It's not to hide behind the iPod or to downplay the Mac at all," Apple's Phil Schiller said. "Since we designed the iMac, a lot has happened at Apple – probably the most influential thing that has happened in years is the iPod, both in terms of product design and having greater reach in the marketplace. It's still an iMac, it's still what an iMac is about."

The design and marketing of the iMac G5 with its ties to the iPod makes a lot of sense to analysts, who have seen the iPod as one of the shining stars in Apple's product lines.

"I think the new design will surprise many people," said Technology Business Research analyst Tim Deal. "While I think this was the natural next step for Apple in terms of the evolution of the iMac's all-in-one design, I also think that it is unconventional. It's simple, functional and almost spartan in appearance."

iPod division not leaving the Mac behind. When Apple made two divisions in the company this past May, one for the iPod and one for the Macintosh, many people felt that the Mac was taking a second seat to the success of the iPod. Marketing campaigns and much of what has come out of Apple has focused on the iPod, but Schiller says that is not the case.

"I know people thought that and I really hope that when they see this iMac that it shows that it's not the case," said Schiller. "We are applying our innovation and engineering design talents to everything we do, including the iPod and all of our Mac product lines."

Jupiter Research Senior Analyst Joe Wilcox says the new design shows how serious Apple is about its Macintosh computers.

"Many people have asked whether Apple would dump the Mac in favor of iPod," said Wilcox. "The new iPod positioning and even iPod-like look show how serious Apple is about selling computers. Apple's hidden message is that if you buy an iPod you really need a cool Mac to go with it."

In fact, with the ties to the iPod and the penetration Apple has with the iPod in markets outside of the traditional Mac audiences, the iMac may be a first-time purchase for many people, according to analyst Tim Deal.

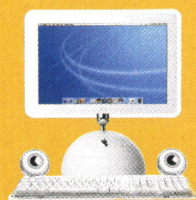
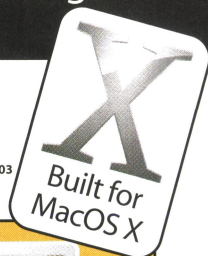
"Naturally, I think Apple's loyal customer base will love them," said Deal. In addition, Apple has a real opportunity to position this as a first-time Mac-owner product to the uninitiated. The iPod has given many PC owners their first taste of Apple's technology; the new iMac may very well be their second. ● *Jim Dalrymple*

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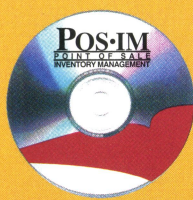
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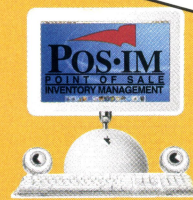
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■ HARDWARE



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Canon conquers the picolitre

IN late August, Canon launched an entire range of photo printers and all-in-one devices based on a new printing platform it calls PIXMA. The print head at the core of the PIXMA range delivers ink droplets as small as one picolitre, which Canon claims will produce unprecedented accuracy and colour consistency.



The new range also includes multi-function devices which, for the first time from Canon, fully support Mac OS X. The MP750 (\$499) and MP780 (\$599) multi-function printers feature print speeds up to 25ppm in black and 17ppm in colour, with the ability to produce borderless 4 × 6-inch photos in as little as 36 seconds. They also offer dual paper paths, a duplex unit, electronic sorting, scanning with a maximum of 2400 × 4800 dpi resolution and PictBridge compatibility for printing photos directly from a digital camera. The MP780 also includes a Super G3 fax modem with 250-page memory and colour and black-and-white capability.

The MP130 (\$249) offers print speeds up to 18ppm in black and 13ppm in colour, with the capacity to print borderless 4 × 6-inch photos in as few as 58 seconds. It can also scan at a maximum 1200 × 2400 dpi resolution and can create individual files from several photographs scanned in a single pass.

All three of the new Pixma MP Photo All-in-One printers feature USB 2.0 connectivity and come bundled with Easy PhotoPrint and ScanSoft OmniPage SE software, with the MP130 also coming with Arcsoft PhotoStudio. Canon expects to ship the new models in November.

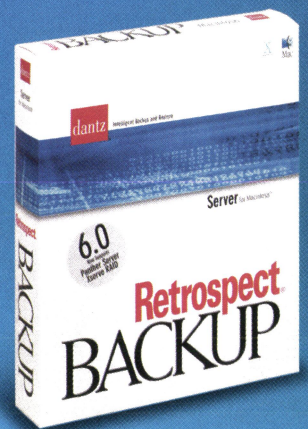
Highlights of the printer range. The entry-level PIXMA iP1000 delivers ink droplets as small as five picolitres in a compact and stylish unit that will sell for a mere \$89. Its slightly bigger brother, the iP1500, delivers smaller (two-picolitre) droplets and costs \$129. The iP4000R (\$449) features 802.11g wireless networking, print speeds up to 25ppm in black and 17ppm in colour, with the ability to produce a borderless 4 × 6-inch photo in as few as 36 seconds. The iP5000 (\$349) can handle the same print speeds but doesn't offer wireless networking. However, it features the finest print head of the range, offering single-picolitre accuracy. The iP6000D (\$699) can print the same borderless picture in as few as 75 seconds but also includes a 2.5-inch colour LCD screen for fine-tuning the printing process and its media slot accepts a range of storage cards for direct printing of photos. It also features an infra-red port for direct printing from mobile phones, but (strangely) not Bluetooth.

The flagship iP8500 (\$599) can print a 4 × 6-inch borderless photo in as little as 21 seconds or an 8.5 × 11-inch picture in approximately one minute. It's compatible with Adobe RGB mode for printing images photographed that way with a Canon digital SLR camera. All four iP printers offer PictBridge technology and come with Easy PhotoPrint software. They're also all compatible with Mac OS X v10.2.1 and will ship in October.

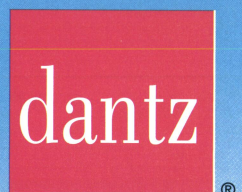
Software issues. AMW's initial test of the software that comes with the printers was slightly disappointing. The in-built colour-correction facilities are designed very much for portrait-style pictures and offer virtually no brightness or contrast adjustments for images that don't include people. We were also concerned that the CD label-printing software has no facility to place text on a curve — an obvious requirement for CD labels and a feature that is included in the Windows version of the software.

Canon said it would address these issues. ● Brad Cook and Matthew JC. Powell

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■ HARDWARE



Hot Links

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All things Mac and Microsoft

Microsoft intros new mice, keyboards

MICROSOFT has introduced a swag of new mice and keyboards: Wireless Optical Desktop, which comes with a wireless mouse and keyboard; Wireless Notebook Optical Mouse; Digital Media Pro Keyboard; updates to the Optical Desktop Elite for Bluetooth and the IntelliMouse Explorer for Bluetooth, and Standard Wireless Optical Mouse. There is also a wired Optical Mouse designed by renowned French designer Philippe Starck for \$60. All are USB-based and work with Mac OS X v10.1 or higher, with the wireless devices requiring AA batteries.

The Wireless Optical Desktop (\$150) package features a Curve Design keyboard with a Zoom Slider, which enables enlarging and reducing text and images by sliding a lever, and My Favorites keys that you can map to frequently-used functions. It also comes with a Wireless Optical Mouse that offers the ability to scroll horizontally as well as vertically by tilting the scroll wheel. The Wireless Notebook Optical Mouse (\$70) will be available in slate or winter blue colours and includes a receiver that snaps into its underside when not in use, automatically shutting it off to conserve battery power.

(*Australian Macworld's* initial tests of the Wireless Notebook Optical Mouse were not encouraging. Despite the Mac finding the mouse on its USB bus, it did not respond to mouse movement. Hopefully this will be fixed with a software update by the time you read this.)



Starck Wired Optical Mouse

The Digital Media Pro Keyboard (\$60) is the wired version of the keyboard available in the Wireless Optical Desktop package while the Standard Wireless Optical Mouse (\$90) is a basic three-button with a scroll wheel mouse available in black or white. Microsoft noted that the buttons have been integrated with the body of the mouse and that its advances in research should enable users to get six months of battery life.

The updated Bluetooth devices (\$300 for the Desktop Elite and \$150 for the Mouse) should, according to Microsoft, be more widely compatible with other Bluetooth profiles, meaning you can link to your mobile or PDA with the same Bluetooth connector. There's also a more compact Bluetooth receiver for those without internal Bluetooth modules. ● *Brad Cook and Matthew JC. Powell*

■ SOFTWARE



Hot Links

www.microsoft.com/mac
Mactopia

Virtual PC update adds G5 support

VIRTUAL PC didn't exactly get off to an auspicious start as part of Microsoft's product line. A few months after buying the emulation program from Connectix, Microsoft announced that the software, which allows the Mac to emulate PC hardware, was incompatible with the Power Mac G5. Microsoft hopes things go more smoothly with Virtual PC 7, the first major Virtual PC release the software giant has overseen. Version 7 features long-awaited G5 support and other improvements aimed at enhancing usability.

Why the delay in adding G5 compatibility? For reasons of speed, the old version of the application made some processor-related assumptions that weren't valid for the G5 chip. Making

up for lost speed, Microsoft has tweaked the new version to show 15 percent increases across the board, regardless of the system being used. Virtual PC 7 also uses the OpenGL graphics technology in Mac OS X to speed up scrolling, redrawing, and other interface-related activities. G5 users should also see improvements in disk-intensive tasks such as copying files.

Virtual PC 7 uses the familiar Apple installer instead of the drag-and-drop installation of earlier versions, so it's easier to assign more RAM to your virtual OS; the update also offers better setup assistance. In addition, version 7 enters Stand By mode by default, rather than shutting down; this saves time when you return to your virtual environment. For printing, the new Virtual PC can send a PostScript file to your Mac printer driver, which then converts that file to PDF before printing it. Since Mac OS is doing most of the work, printing should be faster and more accurate.

The first two versions of Virtual PC 7, featuring the Windows XP Professional (\$499) or Windows XP Home (\$449) operating systems, should ship in October. A \$499 Windows 2000 Professional version should follow in December.

Microsoft Office for Mac, Professional Edition, which includes Virtual PC 7, will also ship in October. ● *Jonathan Seff*



■ TWENTY YEARS OF THE MAC



Hot Links

movies.differentdistrict.com/play.php?id=207_0_28_0_M
The Lemmings ad



(Un)happy days

SURE, Apple is basking in well-deserved kudos as part of the 20th anniversary of the Macintosh. But not everything touched by the company in the past two decades has turned to gold. In fact, Apple's history is littered with products or ideas the company would just as soon bury in a landfill alongside the last remaining Lisa computers. Here are five Apple misses you shouldn't expect to see feted on the cover of AMW when their 20th anniversaries role around. ● *Philip Michaels*

Lemmings

■ Rating ●●●
■ When January 1985

The idea. Eager to recapture the success of its "1984" Super Bowl ad from the year before, Apple bought another chunk of commercial time during Super Bowl XIX to advertise the forthcoming Macintosh Office.

What went wrong. What went wrong: Off-putting and a bit of a downer (the spot featured businesspeople marching single-file off a cliff) the ad bombed.

1985 Microsoft Pact

■ Rating ●●●●●
■ When October 1985

The idea. Apple CEO John Sculley gave Microsoft the right to use some Mac OS technology in Windows, in exchange for continuing to upgrade Word and delaying a Windows version of Excel for a year.

What went wrong. By agreeing to do what it probably would have done anyway, Microsoft got a hand from Apple in developing the OS that would eventually marginalise the Mac platform — for free.

Carl Sagan

■ Rating ●●
■ When November 1993

The idea. Apple engineers gave the Power Mac 7100/66 the code-name "Carl Sagan" as a tribute to the famous astronomer.

What went wrong. Sagan, thinking Apple was trying to profit from his reputation, was less than honoured — especially when, after his initial complaints, the code name was changed to BHA (which allegedly stood for "Butt-Head Astronomer").

Pippin

■ Rating ●
■ When March 1996

The idea. Apple teamed up with toy maker Bandai to develop this 66MHz game console that could also connect to the internet.

What went wrong. More expensive than a PlayStation! Less powerful than a Macintosh! Scrapped by its developers in a single bound!

Power Mac G4 Launch

■ Rating ●
■ When October 1999

The idea. Apple unveiled its Power Mac G4 in 400MHz, 450MHz, and 500MHz configurations.

What went wrong. A shortage of G4 chips forced Apple to scale back the Power Mac configurations to 350MHz, 400MHz, and 450MHz, but it didn't cut prices. Mac users were understandably disgruntled about paying the same price for less processing power.

Precision

■ BRIEFS

**Hot Links**

www.mozilla.org/products/firefox

Firefox web browser

www.auc.edu.au/index2.html?audf/scholarship/index.html~mainFrame

Apple University Consortium

www.skype.com

Internet telephony

www.osdc.com.au/

Open-Source Developers' Conference

Firefox 1.0 preview release now available

Web browser Firefox has reached version 1.0; a preview release is now available (see "Hot links"). Firefox features pop-up blocking, tabbed browsing, a Google search window built into the toolbar, privacy tools, RSS integration, customisation options and more. In addition, it comes with developer tools that include a JavaScript and CSS error warning console and an optional Document Inspector that helps you learn where problems may lie with your web pages.

You can expect to see the final release of Firefox 1.0 sometime in the fourth quarter. System requirements call for Mac OS X v10.1.x, a G3, G4 or G5 running at 266MHz (a G4 running at 667MHz is recommended), 64MB RAM (256MB recommended) and 72MB hard drive space. The software is free, although you can also order it on CD for \$US5.95. ● **Brad Cook**

AUC offers student scholarship

The Apple University Consortium (AUC) is offering a Student Scholarship Program that is open to full-time students studying at AUC member universities in Australia. The scholarship includes a PowerBook, programming tools, support from a high-level mentor, support to attend Apple's Worldwide Developer Conference (WWDC) in San Francisco, support to attend the AUC's own Australian Academic & Developer's Conference, and a chance to participate in Apple's internship program in Cupertino.

Students selected for the scholarship are expected "to produce innovative applications for the Mac platform, working individually or with other participants in the program." Applications close on October 15, 2004. More details, see "Hot links". ● **Peter Cohen**

Photoshop Elements 3.0

Adobe Systems introduced Photoshop Elements 3.0, a major upgrade to its consumer-level photo editing application, in mid-September. The update adds several new features and enhancements that allow the amateur and pro alike to edit photos with a few mouse clicks.

While many Mac users currently use iPhoto to brighten a picture or reduce red-eye, Adobe says the two products don't compete and can easily be used in conjunction with one another.

"People wanted an integrated solution and iPhoto already had a lot of the functionality, so we chose to build a product to comple-

ment iPhoto," Tapan Bhat, Director of Product Management, Digital Imaging at Adobe, said.

In addition to the Quick Fix, which allows you to correct some of the most common types of flaws in photos, Adobe has added Smart Fix to Elements 3.0. Smart Fix automatically detects and fixes lighting, colour and contrast of an image for you. Both Smart Fix and Quick Fix have an advanced option that will allow you to control the enhancement levels manually using slider bars.

Elements 3.0 will also include many other feature improvements such as editable and searchable metadata, Spot Healing Brush & Healing Brush, the ability to use Camera Raw files, PDF slideshows, and Web Photo Galleries to name just a few.

Elements 3.0 will be available in a few months. ● **Jim Dalrymple and Peter Cohen**

Skype offers free internet telephony

Skype Technologies has released a beta of the Mac OS X version of its free software for making phone calls over the internet. Skype features contact management functions, call and message tracking, file transfers up to 2GB, instant messaging, end-to-end encryption in all transmissions and more. It also includes the

company's SkypeOut service, which enables you to pre-pay for calls to land lines and mobile phones anywhere in the world for as little as two US cents per minute; a rate sheet on the Skype web site (see "Hot links" breaks down the prices. The software requires Mac OS X v10.3, a G3 running at 400MHz, 128MB RAM and 20MB free hard drive space.

● **Brad Cook**

Dual licensing

QuarkXPress 6 users haven't had too many kind things to say about the licensing policies for the desktop publishing application. Quark has responded to some of the complaints — it's altering its single-user license so QuarkXPress 6 users can install and activate the program on a second

computer at no additional charge. (Existing

Quark Mobile Licensing customers can request a coupon toward the purchase of Quark software or services.) That should produce a little goodwill for Quark; more important, it helps designers who use a desktop in the office and a laptop on the road produce a lot more work. ● **AMW Staff**

Aussie open-source conference

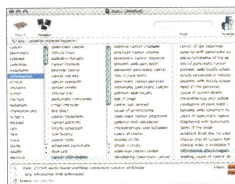
The first Australian Open-Source Developers' Conference is scheduled to be held at the Caulfield campus of Melbourne's Monash University from the first to third of December. Registration should be open by the time you read this. See "Hot links" for more info.

The conference should be of interest to the Mac community because of the open-source underpinnings of Mac OS X, but there is another angle: one of the organizers of the conference is Tony Smith, who was instrumental in setting up the first Australian Macworld Expo back in 1985. ● **Matthew JC. Powell**



Off the net

Latest shareware and free downloads



■ **TheConcept 1.0.1** \$US39.95 Shareware X (10.2 or later)

TheConcept is a brilliant research tool that helps

you search better online. Enter a search term, and it will search Google for those keywords. It then visits each of the web sites recommended by Google, and analyses terms on those pages. Finally, it presents you with a cross-referenced list of terms to help you search more laterally.

■ **Mac Business 2.94** \$US22.95 Shareware X (10.3 or later)

Super-simple time management and invoicing for very small businesses. Just the program for people who don't want or need a complex accounting package. Includes client database, to-do list with iCal integration, and customisable invoices.

■ **Mailbase 1.0b12** \$US97 Shareware X (10.3 or later)

Archive e-mail out of your favourite e-mail client into a database with lightning-quick search. Supports Apple Mail, PowerMail, Entourage, Outlook Express, Claris Emailer and Eudora.

■ **Document Manager 3.0** Freeware X (10.3 or later)

Tool for school IT managers to create student directories on a file server, then allow teachers to view "classes" of students and their submitted assignments.

■ **Bloxtor 1.13** \$US19.95 Shareware X

Space invaders crossed with Tetris. Great fun!

■ **MPlayer 2.0b8r2** Freeware X (10.3 or later)

Bug-fix of the popular MPlayer video player software that allows playback of movies with AAC soundtracks.

■ **Nightie-Night 0.9** Freeware X (10.3 or later)

Sleep-timer for iTunes: gradually fades your music out and then sleeps the Mac. When your Mac awakes, it fades the music back in.

■ **iBush 2.3** Freeware X (10.1.5)

Ask President George W. Bush to incoherently ramble on any topic you like.

■ **DockSwitch 1.4** Freeware X (10.3 or later)

Switch between multiple Dock sets. Great if you use many graphics apps sometimes, but most of the time only need Dock access to a smaller set of apps, for example.

■ **KidzMail 1.5** \$19.00 Shareware X (10.1 or later)

E-mail for kids! Mum and dad set up the address book, then kids just do the hard work of drawing pictures into e-mails and choosing who to send them to.

■ **PodGourmet 1.0** \$5 Shareware X (3rd or 4th gen iPod)

Recipes for your iPod. Use at your own sticky-fingered peril.

■ **WirelessDriver 1.0.0b5** Freeware X (10.2 or later)

Use third party Wi-Fi cards in your PowerBook. Avoid paying Apple's outrageous prices. Get 802.11g on a "non-Extreme" PowerBook.

■ **iPodBackup 1.1b4** Freeware X (10.3 or later)

Use those empty gigs on your iPod for something useful, like backing up your

home folder. This cleverly doesn't backup your music folder, for obvious reasons.

■ **MenuCalendarClock 1.0** \$US14.95 Shareware X (10.2.8 or later)

Put an enhanced clock and drop-down calendar in your menu bar, then import birthdays from your address book and events from iCal.

■ **PlainClip 1.0.5** Freeware X (10.2 or later)

Strip formatting from any text in the clipboard. A godsend for graphic designers.

■ **Hack to the Past 1.0** Freeware X (10.3 or later)

Revert OS X's annoying ⌘+Shift+N for new folder back to the old Mac OS X standard, ⌘+N.

■ **TNEF's enough 2.0** Freeware X

Ever received an e-mail you couldn't open, with a "winmail.dat" attachment? That's Microsoft's proprietary TNEF e-mail format. This utility will open it for you.

■ **MacFreeSCI 2.0** Freeware X (10.3 or later)

Play old Sierra adventure games like Space Quest and King's Quest on your Mac, using this Cocoa interpreter for Sierra's SCI game language.

■ **Printer Setup Repair 4.1.3** \$US20 Shareware X (10.3 or later)

Fixes a multitude of things that can go wrong with OS X's printing system.



Hot Links

www.ausmac.net

Download the software in Off the net

Performance





The view from the other side of the counter.

By Fleur Doidge.

Take a tablet

ARECENTLY uncovered Apple filing for a European design trademark suggests the vendor is still considering plans for PDAs or tablet-style computers. The documents reportedly contain sketches of what looks like a small iBook screen, sans body, but with an iPod dock-type port on the side. Indeed the just-unveiled iMac G5 looks like it could, with little modification, morph into a tablet in some future revision.

Resellers will be waiting with bated breath to find out if these reports are true. Indeed, they have been waiting for some time. Could such a device — should it ever leave the drawing board — ease current stress on Apple resellers?

The scheduling seems decidedly off. Other, previously successful, vendors are leaving the PDA market. Distributors stocking tablet PCs in this country have been near-unanimously underwhelmed by customer demand, as have mass-market retailers. Apple, however, has sometimes been accused of doing its own thing — operating on Apple time, regardless of the rest of the market.

Maybe Apple knows something that Gartner, IDC, Toshiba and Sony don't. Some analysts, such as Gartner's Andy Woo, have said that the day of the tablet is coming but dawn is a long way off. Tablet PCs are doomed for some time to remain expensive, niche devices for particular applications in specialised verticals, such as healthcare and architecture.

It seems unlikely an Apple tablet would reliably reap enough revenue to reward the devotion of Apple resellers. Just what your small local reseller needed: another pretty box to gather dust on the shelf until that one person in a million walks in.

Warning signs. Resellers can and will go where the profits lead them. Next Byte, Apple's largest reseller in Australia, is doing quite well with its little sideline in selling PCs, for instance.

One of the places resellers want to go today is into the digital home. More than just Apple's "digital hub" concept, a "digital home" is a dwelling where digital technology enables home functions (lighting, refrigeration and temperature control), and entertainment features (TV, radio and movie-watching), to converge.

Most vendors interpret that as meaning offering more functionality from one box, and connecting all the technologies around the house on one network. Although profits from such relatively embry-



Hot Links

www.gartner.com

Gartner Group international market research

www.theregister.co.uk/2004/08/13/apple_tablet_mac/

Apple tablet rumours

onic technologies are still tiny, there is an undoubted snowball effect implied within the very term "convergence".

Few doubt the trend will gather momentum.

For PDAs and tablets, the link with the digital home is obvious. Both are aimed at unifying divergent functions in one device, with the notion of using that one mobile device across the network at home, on the road and at work.

Funky, user-friendly digital functionality has long been Apple's *raison d'être*. However, Apple is now facing competition from other vendors in

that space (witness Windows Media Center), as well as in other traditional Apple verticals such as education and the creative professions. The niche is going mainstream (again).

Many Apple products are a hard sell, and getting harder as personal computing gets ever more commoditised. The trade-off — that aura of quality, exclusivity and innovation — won't sustain all the resellers out there. There are a lot more Apple resellers than Ferrari dealers in Australian towns.

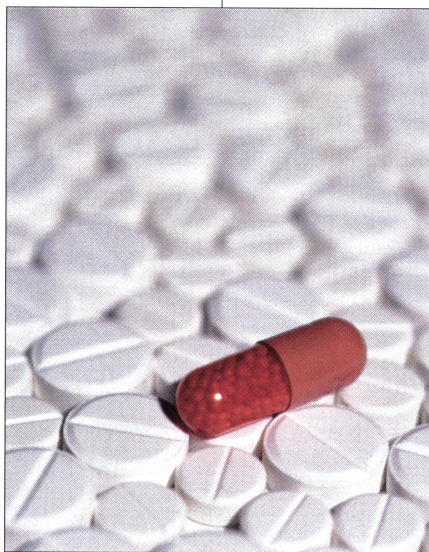
Apple needs to come up with more saleable product with good margins, whether through service, support or the product itself. Resellers can't survive by simply shifting boxes any more; they need powerful value-add. A guy can only sell so many iPods, especially when there's not many on the shelf.

Further, copying music from CDs — even for personal playback on a secondary device — is illegal here. What happens to the dealer channel when and if Australia starts to get tough about enforcement? A knife-seller isn't held liable if the buyer runs off and murders someone, but if a dealer is selling a product with no legitimate use, that's another story.

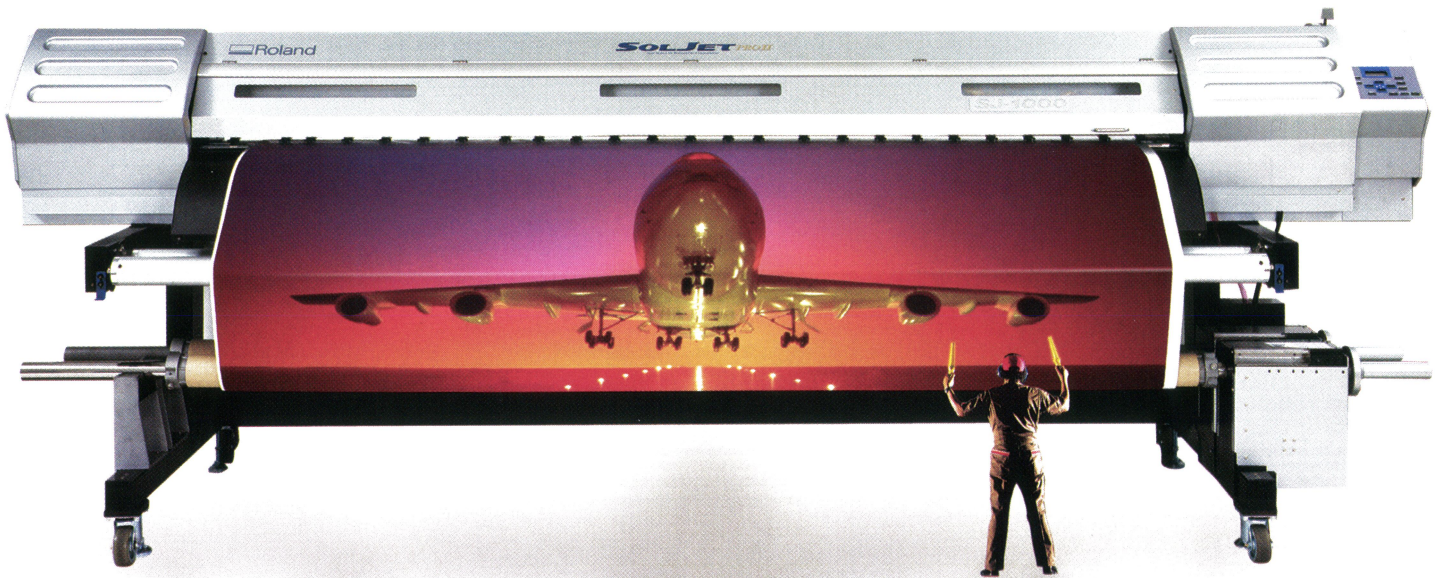
There's no indication when, if ever, the iTunes Music Store will be available here. The only legitimate use for an iPod in this country (unless you're a muso and use your iPod solely to store music you wrote) is its voice recording and contact management functionality. It's unlikely that the majority of iPod buyers are using the devices for that. Which brings me back to the PDA question.

If Apple knows something about the market for PDAs or tablets that the rest of us don't, it needs to get a compelling product onto shelves in time to satisfy resellers who are starting to look elsewhere. If it's working on something, let's see it. If, on the other hand, its plans for the "digital home" do not involve a tablet-style device, time is running out for it to make those plans clear.

Rome wasn't built in a day by one guy with an iPod, you know. ☹



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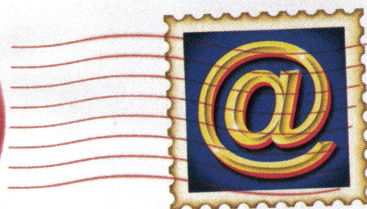
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Christopher Breen and Joe Kissell.

Photograph by Peter Belanger
Illustrations by Steve Forney



E-MAIL SURVIVAL GUIDE

PICK THE PERFECT PROGRAM, MANAGE YOUR MAIL, AND ZAP SPAM

Do you find it increasingly difficult to deal with the daily flood of e-mail? Do you wish your e-mail client could share information with other Mac programs? If so, it may be time for you to choose a new e-mail program.

E-mail management is no place for nostalgia — you shouldn't stick with a client simply because you've used it since the Keating government. You're better off basing your choice on the volume of e-mail you receive, the control you need over your e-mail program, and how well the app fits into your workflow.



Hot Links

homepage.mac.com/aamann/Eudora_Mailbox_Cleaner.html

Eudora Mailbox Cleaner

www.scriptbuilders.net/category.php?id=1667

Paul Berkowitz's AppleScript collection

homepage.mac.com/aamann/Eudora_vCard_Export.html

Eudora vCard Export

www.littlemachines.com

Outlook2Mac

junkmatcher.sourceforge.net

JunkMatcher

www.austlii.edu.au/

Get info on Australian anti-spam laws

CHANGE E-MAIL CLIENTS

Create an e-mail wish list.

Before you can find the perfect fit, you need to understand what features are most important to the way you use e-mail. To help you sort it all out, first consider some of the big issues.

Money matters. If price is your primary concern, you can't go wrong by choosing an application you already have – Apple Mail. Likewise, if you've shelled out money for the Microsoft Office 2004 suite, you already own Entourage.

Spam protection. If you have an e-mail account, you will get spam. Many ISPs and company networks try to filter out the obvious spam before it reaches you. If yours don't do that – or if you're still overrun with the stuff – you'll want an e-mail client that can take on the task. All the programs we recommend here offer spam filters that learn how to identify incoming spam correctly and remove it from your in-box. If you receive a lot of spam, you'll further benefit from a program with sophisticated mail filters, such as those included with Entourage or Bare Bones Software's Mailsmith. These filters can help you isolate the spam that circumvents your other barriers.

Simplicity. Completing day-to-day e-mail tasks shouldn't require excessive brain activity. If you often receive or create HTML-formatted messages, for example, you should think twice about adopting an e-mail client such as Mailsmith, which makes you jump through hoops to do either. You should also consider the accessibility of the information you need. If you routinely use OS X's Address Book or iCal, you'll be happier if your e-mail client does, too.

Manageability. Some people keep every message they've ever received in one in-box. And that's fine for very light e-mail users or people who don't mind weeding through an endless list of messages. If you receive a lot of mail, you'll benefit greatly from a program with sophisticated mail filters that can automatically sort and prioritise your incoming messages.

You also may want a client that offers flexible scheduling. Although all e-mail clients can download mail every couple of minutes, only high-end programs such as Entourage and Mailsmith let you create more-complicated schedules – for example, to access a rarely used account only on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

Advanced control. If you regularly receive or send high volumes of mail, you may need something that goes above and beyond the normal call of duty. You might want to use AppleScript, Apple's native scripting language, to automate some of your e-mail client's tiresome tasks. Or you may want to be able to add mail headers to your outgoing e-mail messages – a PGP fingerprint header, for example.

Proper access. E-mail is hosted on one of two kinds of servers – POP (Post Office Protocol) or IMAP (Internet Message Access Protocol). POP accounts, which download messages to your computer, are more common than IMAP accounts, which store mail on your ISP's server. However, many web-based e-mail services – including Apple's .Mac – require an IMAP connection. If you use an IMAP account and your client doesn't support it, the client is useless to you.

Find the right fit.

OS X users have several options when it comes to choosing an e-mail client, but three programs stand out from the rest in terms of features, reliability, and performance: Apple Mail, Microsoft Entourage 2004, and Bare Bones Software's Mailsmith 2.1. The kind of e-mail user you are will determine your choice.

The casual e-mailer. You receive a light to moderate amount of e-mail and don't spend much time trying to keep it organised, beyond dividing it into folders. You already use (or would like to use) Apple's Address Book and iCal programs, and you want an e-mail program that can take advantage of them.

Recommendation: Apple Mail 1.3.

Why: Apple's e-mail client has evolved into a reasonably mature application. Mail is accessible enough for beginners and complete enough for people who need to manage a moderate amount of e-mail.

Mail includes all the basic rules necessary to capably route messages to different mailboxes (although the list of rules isn't as extensive as that of Entourage or Mailsmith). Users who collaborate with others via e-mail will particularly appreciate Mail's Thread view, which groups messages that are part of an ongoing exchange. Mail's scheduling options are extremely limited compared with those in Entourage – you can't create multiple schedules, and you can't ask Mail to check your mail less often than once an hour. There is potential for adding more-advanced features; Mail offers solid support for AppleScript and lets you trigger an AppleScript from a mail rule.

Of course, Mail's greatest advantage is its integration with other Apple applications. You can configure iCal to send announcements of upcoming events through Mail, and you can add contacts to Address Book with the click of a button.

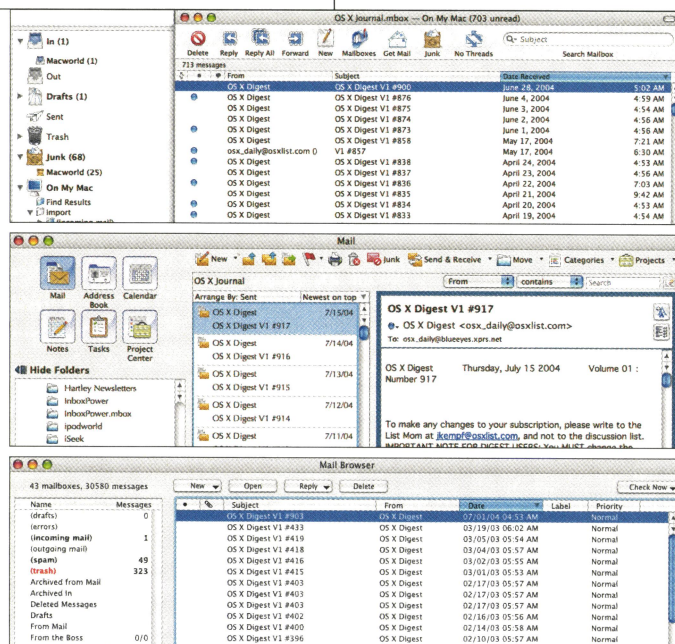
The Office e-mailer. You rely on Microsoft Office to get your job done, and you want an e-mail program that seamlessly integrates into your workflow. You get a moderate to heavy amount of e-mail and you need a way to sort through your incoming messages quickly, pick out the important messages from the not-so-important notes, and file them away in the appropriate folders.

Recommendation: Microsoft Entourage 2004.

Why: Entourage offers nearly every feature found in Mail (except integration with other Apple programs and message threading) and many more.

Entourage's greatest strengths lie in its management features. Its mail rules can filter messages in ways not possible in Mail – for example, you can create rules that apply only to messages formatted as HTML. Its Mailing List Manager greatly simplifies the process of sorting mailing-list e-mail. The program's Project Center, which allows you to organise contacts, events, mail, and documents by project, is unmatched in any other e-mail client.





Take three. Here's a look at Mail (top), Entourage (middle), and Mailsmith (bottom) in their default browser modes.

Entourage can schedule more tasks than Mail can. It's also the only e-mail client in this roundup that can trigger an AppleScript from a schedule – for example, to archive messages when you quit the program.

Entourage doesn't share information with Address Book or iCal. Instead, it offers its own tools for managing contacts, calendars, notes, and more. If you work in a cross-platform office, you'll appreciate the program's superior support for Microsoft Exchange Server – server-based software that lets Entourage and Outlook users share contacts and calendars over a network. Entourage is also the only Mac e-mail client that can send and receive Hotmail.com messages by default.

Entourage's weakest link is its single database. A bloated database can slow down performance, and if it becomes corrupt, you could lose everything. If you choose Entourage as your e-mail client, you should regularly back up Entourage's Database file (located in your user folder at Documents: Microsoft User Data: Office 2004 Identities: Main Identity).

The e-mail commander. You're no e-mail novice. You use e-mail for advanced tasks, such as running a newsletter or managing multiple accounts, and you need to have full access to your e-mail settings. You also want a no-nonsense program that can quickly search and manipulate a high volume of e-mail.

Recommendation: Bare Bones Software's Mailsmith 2.1.

Why: Although Mailsmith is approachable enough for typical Mac users, it tends to appeal to a highly technical – and proudly geeky – audience.

If you're accustomed to other e-mail clients, you may be thrown off by Mailsmith's spartan interface and its lack of amenities common in other e-mail programs – for example, support for HTML messages (though you can view such messages in your default browser at the click of a button), support for IMAP e-mail accounts, and an in-line spelling checker.

For exercising complete control over your e-mail client, Mailsmith's list of features is hard to beat. Although the program

doesn't search mounds of messages as quickly as Qualcomm's Eudora, Mailsmith does a better job of pinpointing the messages you're after, thanks to its highly configurable search feature. For example, you can search for words that begin or end a text string, or use special grep characters to identify loose patterns of text. The options for creating mail filters are just as expansive.

Mailsmith offers built-in support for PGP encryption and Michael Tsai's powerful SpamSieve software – which is superior in many ways to what you'll find in Mail or Entourage. If you're handy with AppleScript, you can automate nearly all of the program's functions.

Make the switch.

Regrettably, there's more to switching e-mail clients than just deciding which one suits you. There's also the sometimes-messy business of moving e-mail and addresses to a new home.

Most e-mail programs have an Import command that automates the process of moving your e-mail, contacts, and other data. If the Import option doesn't support your client – or if it doesn't do a sufficient job – there's still hope. You can almost always get the job done with a third-party utility or by manually converting your files into the standard mbox or vCard formats.

Moving to Mail. If you're moving to Mail from Entourage, Outlook Express, Netscape/Mozilla, or Claris E-mailer, open Mail's Import Mailboxes command (File: Import Mailboxes) and select the appropriate import option. You can also import mbox files that you created in another application. In the Import window, select Other, click on the right-arrow button, and navigate to the location of the mbox files.

What about Eudora?

Sharp-eyed readers will notice that Qualcomm's Eudora 6.1 doesn't appear on our list of recommended e-mail clients. Although Eudora has been a past favourite — particularly for users who need nearly infinite control over their e-mail settings — the e-mail landscape has changed and, regrettably, Eudora has been slow to change with it.

It's true that Eudora makes quick work of searching massive mailboxes and offers almost limitless ways to customise your mail settings (for example, you can designate which headers will appear in messages sent from a particular account). For most advanced users, these perks won't make up for the program's aging features, including limited filtering options — Eudora provides just two If conditions and four Then actions for sorting messages.

It also does a poor job of displaying complex HTML messages. And although Eudora is scriptable, its scripting dictionary is out of date, so the program is more difficult to script than Mail, Entourage, and Mailsmith.

If Eudora suits you, by all means stick with it. If the program no longer fits the bill and if you need absolute control over your e-mail, I recommend switching to Mailsmith.



Although Mail offers to import e-mail from Eudora automatically, the process is far from ideal — it ignores attachments and removes HTML and rich-text formatting from your messages. Instead, use Andreas Amann's free Eudora Mailbox Cleaner (see "Hot links"). This utility correctly transfers messages, as well as filters and nickname files.

Contacts. Mail stores its contacts in Apple's Address Book. You can import addresses from Entourage, Outlook Express, Palm Desktop, Eudora, Claris E-mailer, or Netscape/Mozilla by using the Import Addresses AppleScript.

If you haven't already installed OS X's Script Menu (look for a tiny scroll that appears in the Finder's menu bar), go to your Applications: AppleScript folder and double-click on the Install Script Menu item. Then, from the Finder, click on the newly installed Script Menu and choose Address Book Scripts: Import Addresses.

Moving to Entourage 2004. E-mail Entourage's Import command (File: Import) will transfer e-mail messages and addresses from Entourage, Outlook Express, Eudora, Mail, Netscape Communicator, and Claris E-mailer. If you're coming from a different e-mail client or from a different computer, first export your messages as an mbox file, and then drag this file onto the Folders On My Computer entry in Entourage's Folders pane.

Contacts. If you have contacts, calendars, notes, and other bits of data stored in Microsoft Outlook or a personal information manager such as Palm Desktop, you can easily bring them to Entourage 2004 with the help of Paul Berkowitz's collection of AppleScripts, Export-Import Entourage X (see "Hot links"). This collection includes more than 50 scripts for moving almost anything into and out of Entourage X and 2004.

If you have vCard files that you exported from another application, you can also import these by dragging them into Entourage's Address Book window.

Moving to Mailsmith. When you launch Mailsmith for the first time, it offers to import mail and contact information from a variety of programs, including Eudora, Claris



Import mail from Microsoft Outlook for Windows

When contemplating a move to the Mac, one of the first questions many Windows users ask is "Will I be able to access my old e-mail, contacts, and calendars on my new computer?" Thanks to Outlook2Mac (see "Hot links"), the answer is yes.

Outlook2Mac painlessly converts Outlook mail to a form that you can import into Mail, Entourage, or Mailsmith. It will also export contact and calendar data to any program that supports the vCard and iCalendar (.ics) file format standards — including Address Book, iCal, and Palm Desktop.

Outlook2Mac is remarkably easy to use. Simply purchase an appropriate version of the program (separate versions are available for Outlook 2002/2003/XP, Outlook 2000, and Outlook 97/98) and launch it. The software then walks you through the process of exporting the needed data. You can select specific mailboxes, a range of calendar dates, and the most appropriate file format for the data export. If you're moving to Address Book or Palm Desktop, you'll need to export your Outlook contacts as a single vCard file. Likewise, iCal requires a single .ics file for calendar data. If you're moving to Entourage, you'll need to export your data as individual vCard and .ics files. You should also instruct the program to filter out any attachments that won't work with your Mac — files ending with an .exe extension, for example.

E-mailer, and Mail. If you need to import mail from other clients or want to add messages after the initial import process, you can do so by dragging mbox files into the Mailsmith window.

Contacts. You can also import contacts from Eudora and other vCard-compatible applications by exporting them as vCard files and dragging them into Mailsmith's Address Book window. (Mailsmith uses OS X's Address Book, so you don't need to import these contacts.)

Exporting to standard file formats

In a computing world rife with incompatible standards, the mbox and vCard file formats offer a rare sliver of sanity. By converting your data into these two cross-platform standards — mbox for e-mail messages and vCard for contacts — you can quickly and easily move much of the information in your e-mail client and address book to other applications, or even to the same application on a different computer.

Creating mbox files. To generate an mbox file from Entourage, Mail, or Mailsmith, just click on one of the program's mail folders and drag it to your desktop. Repeat this for each folder you want to move. Note that in Entourage, the newly generated mbox file won't include any of the folder's subfolders. You'll have to drag these to the desktop separately.

When you drag Mailsmith's mailboxes to the desktop, they become text documents by default. To import these files into Mail

or Entourage, you must first append the .mbox extension to them.

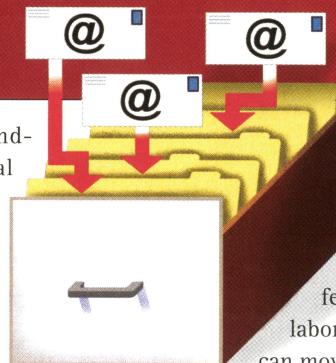
Eudora doesn't support this drag-and-drop method. To access its mbox files, open your user folder and go to Documents: Eudora Folder: Mail Folder.

Creating vCards. In most cases, creating vCards is also a drag-and-drop affair. To export vCards from Apple's Address Book — which both Mail and Mailsmith use — just select the contacts you want and drag them to the desktop. You'll end up with a single file with all the selected contacts.

Unlike Address Book, Entourage won't export multiple contacts as a single vCard file. So if you plan to export multiple contacts, it's a good idea to first create a folder to hold all of the resulting vCards.

To export Eudora's nicknames as vCard files that can be imported into Apple's Address Book, Entourage, or Mailsmith, use Andreas Amann's free Eudora vCard Export (see "Hot links").

GET ORGANISED



E-mail was supposed to be a time-saver. Hand-sorting an inbox overflowing with personal messages, business correspondence, mailing-list deliveries, and jokes from clueless cousins (not to mention the load of unsolicited e-mail you receive each day) can take a substantial bite out of an already busy day.

What you need is an e-mail strategy. Here are seven ways to take control of your jammed in-box.

Establish rules. One of the easiest ways to automate filing duties is to create a mail rule – a set of criteria that tell your e-mail client how to sort and file your messages when they arrive. This not only makes your inbox more manageable, but also helps you quickly prioritise your incoming messages. For example, you can use rules to assign colours to different types of mail, so you can quickly distinguish work assignments from family gossip.

To access rules in Entourage, go to Tools: Rules and click on New. In Mail, go to Mail: Preferences: Rules. In Eudora and Mailsmith, go to Window: Filters.

Regardless of the program you use, the basics of setting up a mail rule are essentially the same. You use If statements to tell your e-mail program how to identify the messages you want to control, and Then statements to specify what to do with those messages.

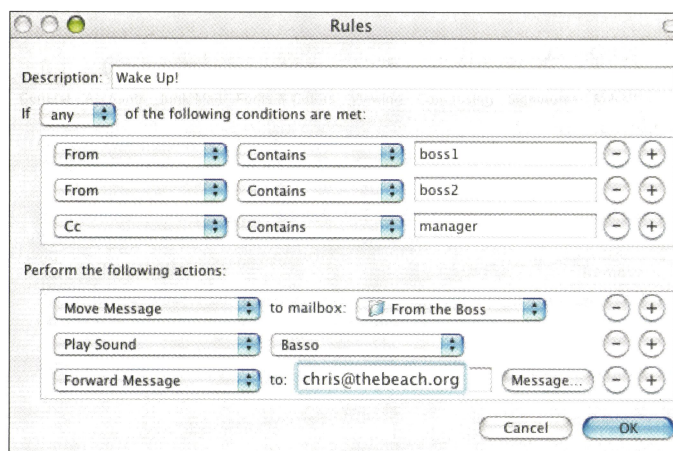
For example, if you have two e-mail addresses – one for personal mail and one for business mail – you might find it useful to separate these messages into two different mailbox folders. Such a filter would look like this:

If: Any Recipient is me@personal_address.com

Then: Move Message to Personal E-mail Folder

For more-powerful filters, you can combine multiple If and Then statements. For example, to make sure you give prompt attention to messages from your company's bigwigs, you might want to move their incoming messages to a From The Boss folder and play a suitably ominous sound.

Aye, aye, boss! A mail rule that alerts you to the presence of messages from higher-ups may save your bacon.



Take control of mailing lists. Using rules is also vital if you subscribe to mailing lists – particularly ones that don't offer digests, but rather copy you on every message sent to the list.

Entourage has a handy Mailing List Manager feature (in the Tools menu) that automates the most laborious aspects of managing such lists. For example, it can move incoming list e-mails to a designated folder, break list digests into individual messages, and delete duplicate copies of messages you send to the list. If you don't use Entourage, you can set up something similar – but much more basic – by creating a mail rule that picks out any message with the list's e-mail address in the From field and moves it to a dedicated mailing-list mailbox.

Follow a conversation. Some e-mail exchanges can span weeks and include half a dozen people. You can often get a quick overview of the back-and-forth by sorting your mail by Subject, but this method is far from perfect: I can't tell you how many of my message threads have started with the subject lines "A quick question" and "Hello."

With Entourage, you have only the sorting method. Mail and Eudora offer more-efficient solutions. In Mail, go to View: Organize By Thread. Mail then groups all your related e-mails – and only the e-mails relevant to this specific thread – under a single heading highlighted in blue. You can view all of the messages in a thread by clicking on the arrow to the left of the highlighted message. To group messages by thread in Eudora, go to Special: Sort: Group Subjects (or just option-click on the message's subject line).

Get a better view. Most e-mail programs offer basic sorting options – such as Message Status, Subject, and To. Entourage 2004, however, lets you further arrange your messages into groups – larger categories of sorted messages that you can then quickly collapse or expand.

For example, you could use the Groups feature to slim down your Entourage database by eliminating large files from your inbox. Turn on Groups by going to View: Arrange By: Show In Groups. Now when you sort your messages by Size (View: Arrange By: Size), Entourage groups them into categories such as Small, Medium, Large, Huge, and Enormous. To eliminate all of your Enormous, Huge, and Large files, click on the Group header (which selects all messages in the group) and press delete.

To further control your messages, you can define how they are sorted within individual groups. For example, you may want to eliminate only some large files: those that are older than a week or that are from certain individuals. To do this, create a new custom arrangement (View: Arrange By: Edit Custom Arrangement) that groups items by size and then arranges items within the group by Sent or by From. Click on OK to save your new arrangement. To apply this view to your inbox, go to View: Arrange By and select the saved custom arrangement.

Find anything fast. Most e-mail clients offer an advanced search option that uses multiple criteria to scan all your stored e-mail. Entourage's advanced search option even lets you include contacts, notes, and calendar options in the hunt.

Apple Mail won't let you search by more than one criterion, but there is a workaround. Create a rule that uses multiple criteria to identify messages and then copies those messages to a special folder.

For instance, if you wanted to find all your business-related messages older than seven days that CC'd your co-worker Fred, you'd create a rule that looked like this:

If: CC contains Fred
Date Received Is Greater Than 7 Days Old
Account Is me@mybusiness.org
Then: Copy Message To Mailbox Fred

To apply the rule to a selection of messages, go to Message: Apply Rule. Everything that meets these requirements will appear in your Fred mailbox, which you can delete once you're done.

Create e-mail archives. Any good e-mail maintenance plan should include a backup strategy. That way, if a question comes

up months or even years from now, you'll have an intact, searchable record of the correspondence. Archiving all of your messages at once can be unwieldy. A better approach is to create separate archives of related messages. This way, you can conserve space by backing up only the messages you need.

One easy way to create these archives is to filter messages as you normally would while also filing away a copy in a separate, archived mailbox. For example, if you employ freelance workers, you might create a rule that filters their messages to a mailbox for whatever project they are currently working on and sends copies to a mailbox called Quarterly Projects, which you archive four times a year.

When you're ready to back up your archive file, just drag the mailbox from your e-mail client (if you're using Mail, Entourage, or Mailsmith) to the desktop to create an mbox file that you can then burn onto a CD. To locate Eudora's mbox files, open your user folder and go to Documents: Eudora Folder: Mail Folder. Later, if you need to access the information in an archived mbox file, just open it in a text editor or drag it back into your e-mail client.

Archive Entourage projects. If you use Entourage 2004's Project Center to group related e-mails, tasks, and documents, you can archive projects via the Export command. In the Export window, enable the Items That Are In The Project option and choose a project from the pop-up menu. To save space, tell Entourage to delete messages once they're archived. Entourage will create an .rge file. To restore the data in this file, select File: Import: Import Information From An Entourage Archive. If you don't want to permanently return the messages to your mailbox, import them into a new identity (Entourage: Switch Identity) and delete the identity when you're done.

Tip

Organise your rules. The order in which mail rules appear is important. E-mail programs apply rules in the order they're listed. So if you've created a filter that moves all messages sent by Jane Doe to one mailbox and another filter that transfers all messages that came from the Mintie Lovers mailing list to another mailbox, Jane's message expressing her love for Minties will be filtered by whichever rule appears first. If one of your rules doesn't work, check to see whether another rule higher in the list conflicts with it.

WIN THE SPAM WAR

Imagine going to your (real) mailbox every day, pulling out hundreds of flyers, and then sorting through them to find the one bill or personal letter you were expecting. For many of us, this is exactly what the spam epidemic has become: a frustrating and time-consuming daily ritual of weeding out offensive and irritating offers so we can get to the messages we actually want and need. To make matters worse, spammers' tactics are constantly changing – rendering spam-proofing strategies that worked a year ago all but useless today.

Even by conservative estimates, spam now accounts for well over half the e-mail sent worldwide. You can fight back – in many cases by using tools you already have. Stopping spam involves much more than just clicking on a check box. A good spam-fighting strategy includes keeping your e-mail address away from spammers, using common sense about reading and replying to spam, and fine-tuning your built-in filter for optimum accuracy.



Don't let the spammers find you. So who exactly are these spammers, and what do they want with you? Although some spammers are hoping you'll give away personal information so they can steal your money, most just want to sell you something. Clever hackers write programs that gather potentially valid e-mail addresses, and then they sell these addresses by the hundreds of millions to spammers – often ordinary people hoping to make a quick buck. Spammers know that most of their messages will be deleted or ignored, but they make up for this in volume. If even a tiny fraction of their messages results in a sale, spammers can make a considerable sum.

Your first line of defence, then, is to stay off the radar of spammers and their address-gathering programs.

Guard your address. The easier it is for someone to find your e-mail address, the more likely you'll be the target of junk mail. So avoid publicising your e-mail address on web pages or in news-group postings. If you really must post your address online, turn

it into a graphic with no mailto link. If you need to enter an address in web forms for online purchases, contest entries, and the like, consider getting a second address, such as a Hotmail account, just for this purpose. This will let you keep your primary address private and relatively spam-free.

Practice the silent treatment. Resist the temptation to reply to spam messages – even to unsubscribe from them. In most cases, no one will read your reply. If it does get through, it simply confirms that your address is valid. In general, you can safely unsubscribe from newsletters and other mailings from legitimate companies with which you've done business – but if you've never heard of the mailer, chances are any Remove Me links are bogus.

The same is true of bouncing messages – returning a spam to its sender in hopes of tricking the spammer into thinking that your address is invalid. Savvy spammers can still tell that a message reached its destination. Besides, since spam messages are sent out by the millions, spammers aren't likely to bother removing invalid addresses from their lists.

Turn off HTML. Spammers can tell that you've read their messages by using a web bug, a small graphic that your e-mail client downloads when you display a message with HTML formatting. The graphic's URL contains a unique identifier tied to your e-mail address, so merely displaying the message tells the spammer's server that you've read it.

To thwart web bugs, turn off the display of HTML graphics in your e-mail client. By default, Entourage 2004 doesn't download images unless the sender is in your address book. In Mail, open your Viewing preferences and deselect the Display Images And Embedded Objects In HTML Messages option. If you receive a legitimate HTML-formatted message, you can easily download the images by clicking on the Load Images button in Mail or the Download Pictures link in Entourage 2004.

Take advantage of spam filters. Of course, it's almost impossible to elude spammers completely. This is where your e-mail program's built-in spam filters come into play. Spam filters function as e-mail gatekeepers, separating invited guests from the riffraff.

Apple Mail 1.3 (included with Panther) and Entourage 2004 both offer significantly better spam-fighting tools than their predecessors. In fact, if you're using earlier versions of Mail or Entourage, I recommend upgrading for the spam improvements alone. To put these built-in filters to work, you need to train them to recognise the type of company you like to keep – and the type that should be left on the curb.

Practice makes perfect. Mail and Entourage use statistical junk-mail filters – programs that try to learn which words and message attributes distinguish spam from legitimate mail. When you identify an incoming message as junk, the filters add information about that message to a database, making it easier for them to identify similar messages in the future. Likewise, the filters track the attributes of valid messages to avoid marking them as spam. By constantly updating their databases, these junk-mail filters get smarter as you use them and are able to better adapt to the latest spamming tactics.

For statistical filters to be effective, you must diligently correct their mistakes. If your e-mail client fails to identify a spam message,

take the time to mark it as junk. In Mail, select the message and choose Message: Mark: As Junk Mail. In Entourage, choose Message: Mark As Junk (or press ⌘-shift-J in either program).

Similarly, if your e-mail client mistakes a legitimate message for spam (called a false positive), correct that mistake by marking the message as Not Junk.

Introduce it to your friends. Because legitimate messages sometimes include the same words and phrases as spam, the best way to prevent false positives is to create a white list – a list of people whose messages should never be marked as junk.

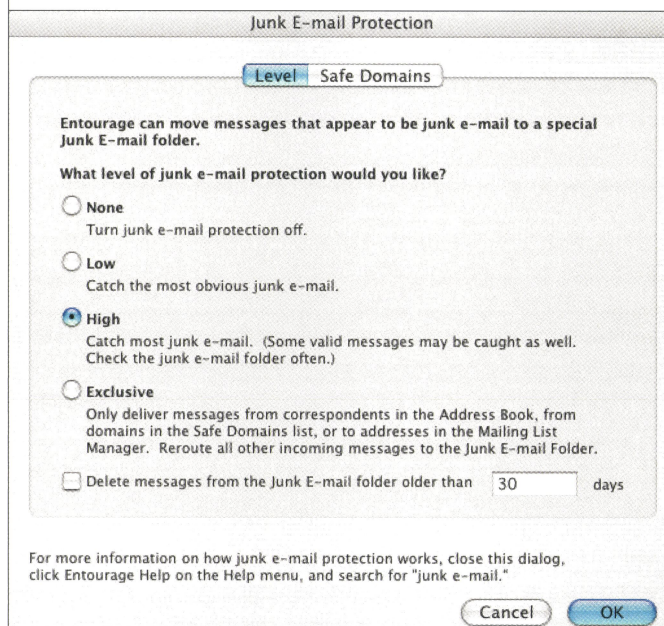
Entourage's spam filter automatically exempts messages from anyone listed in the Entourage Address Book. Similarly, you can have Mail exempt anyone in the OS X Address Book by opening Mail's Junk Mail preferences and selecting the Sender Of Message Is In My Address Book option. Then be sure to keep your address book up-to-date with the names and e-mail addresses of everyone who regularly sends you mail. To add the sender of a selected Mail message to the OS X Address Book, choose Message: Add Sender To Address Book (or press ⌘-Y). To add a sender to Entourage's Address Book, go to Tools: Add To Address Book (or press ⌘-= [equals sign]).

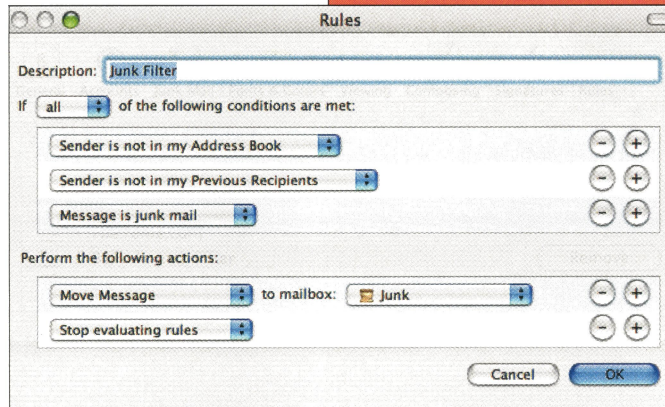
Optimise Mail's settings. Mail's default spam settings offer a good start to fighting junk mail, but they should be considered just that – a start. There's plenty more you can – and should – do to optimise Mail's spam sensitivity.

Go automatic. Mail provides two modes for filtering junk mail. The default – Training mode – simply uses colour to distinguish suspected spam from legitimate mail. This lets you monitor whether Mail is flagging spam correctly. Once you become comfortable with Mail's choices, you should switch to Automatic mode.

In Automatic mode, Mail moves all suspected spam to a Junk mailbox, letting you largely ignore its existence. Despite the confusing names, switching from Training to Automatic mode

Better protection. To make Entourage less tolerant of spam, make sure its Junk E-mail Protection setting is High.





Priority filtering. To catch spam that Mail's default Junk Mail rule misses, create your own rule (as shown here) and put it at the top of the Rules list.

doesn't interfere with the training process at all; the Junk Mail filter continues to learn new spam-fighting skills as you correct its mistakes.

To put the filter in Automatic mode, open Mail's Junk Mail preferences, make sure Enable Junk Mail Filtering is selected, and then select the Move It To The Junk Mailbox (Automatic) option.

Tweak your preferences. While you have your Junk Mail preferences open, I recommend making a couple of other changes to further heighten your spam security.

Because spam frequently includes the recipient's full name, deselect the Message Is Addressed Using My Full Name option. Next, turn on the Trust Junk Mail Headers Set By Your Internet Service Provider option. Some ISPs add a special header (called the X-Spam-Flag header) to incoming messages their servers suspect are spam. By telling Mail to look for this clue, you can increase the Junk Mail filter's accuracy. Even if your ISP doesn't currently offer this feature, there's no harm in leaving this setting turned on.

Preempt other rules. If you use mail rules to file your incoming e-mail, you may find that Mail misses a considerable amount of spam. That's because Mail's built-in Junk Mail rule affects only the messages left in your in-box after all other rules have been applied. So, if you have a rule that filters all of the mail sent to your personal account into a special mailbox, the Junk Mail filter will never look at any of those messages. In this case, consider overriding the built-in Junk Mail rule with one of your own.

To create a new rule that mimics Mail's built-in filter, go to Mail: Preferences, click on Rules, and then choose Add Rule. When you're done, move the new rule to the top of the list so it runs before any others.

Thin out your VIP list. You should also keep an eye on Mail's Previous Recipients list. Mail assumes that if you send someone an e-mail, you want to receive the reply. So every time you hit Send — even if it's only to unsubscribe from a mailing list — Mail adds the person to its Previous Recipients list. Because the Junk Mail filter ignores messages from anyone on this list, you could accidentally give approval to any number of unwanted guests. In fact, in previous versions of Mail, just moving a message to any mailbox other than Junk could add its sender to the approved list.

To remove spurious addresses from this list, choose Window: Previous Recipients. Click on any suspicious addresses

Spammers versus the law



While the Australian Spam Act has been in effect for about six months, not many of us have seen a reduction in the volume of spam in our inbox. From 10 April 2004, the Spam Act has prohibited the sending of "Commercial electronic messages" to people without their consent. While the Act is much stricter than laws such as the "Controlling the Assault of Non-Solicited Pornography and Marketing Act" (known as the CAN SPAM Act) in the US, the flood of spam arriving here daily from offshore has made the effects of our Act undetectable.

Andrew Perry, who chairs the NSW Law Society's Legal Technology Committee and heads Gadens' IP & Technology Group, suggests this is hardly surprising. "The problem with the Spam Act is that the majority of spam comes from overseas and it is difficult to enforce the Act against overseas organisations," he said. "The Act imposes penalties of up to \$1.1 million for repeat offenders, but if you can't find the person who sent the message, or they are outside Australia, there is currently little that can be done to enforce the penalty."

Bill Childs, Lecturer in IT Law at UTS, agrees — albeit more cynically — when asked if anti-spam legislation is worth the paper it's written on: "No — in fact both in Australia and other jurisdictions the amount of spam traffic appears to be increasing. It is like so much window dressing, and all jurisdictions are pretty much the same — anti-spam laws do not work."

Australia is working with other countries to improve its arsenal in the "War on Spam". In July, Government departments from Australia, the UK and USA entered into a memorandum of understanding on mutual enforcement assistance. This MOU follows Australia's MOU in October last year with Korea and a less formal agreement has also been reached with Thailand.

International differences. Under the Australian law, you must be able to show that a person consented to receive a commercial e-mail. This consent might be implied from the fact that they gave you their business card. Under the US Act, however, e-mails can be sent without a recipient's consent provided that each message contains a way to opt-out from future mailings.

Like the CAN-SPAM Act, our Spam Act requires commercial e-mails to include an "opt-out". Registered political parties, religious groups and charities, however, can keep bombarding you with e-mails without giving you the choice. "Because the Australian Constitution protects political free speech," said Perry, "the exemption of political parties from the requirement to obtain consent before sending you an e-mail is both necessary and important for our democracy. It is not quite so clear why you shouldn't be able to opt-out from future mailings."

Bill Childs is doubtful about the chances of a legislative response stopping spam: "The only possible solution ... is an internationally agreed 'technology-based' enforcement regime. Penalties have never really stopped humans who intend to break laws from indulging in illegal or anti-social activities."

● Anthony J. Muzik

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and select Remove From List. If you find the process of pruning your Previous Recipients list too tedious, or if it results in too many false negatives, you can instruct Mail to ignore this list when filtering. Just open your Junk Mail preferences and deselect the Sender Of Message Is In My Previous Recipients option.

Optimise Entourage's settings. Entourage 2004 also lets you customise your spam filter to determine how aggressively it filters your e-mail.

Become less tolerant. Entourage offers three levels of spam filtering – Low, High, and Exclusive. You can access these settings by selecting Junk E-mail Protection from the Tools menu.

Although Entourage uses the Low setting by default, High is appropriate for almost everyone. You should choose Low only if the High setting results in too many false positives – and you can't correct the problem by adding the senders to Entourage's Address Book. Avoid using the Exclusive setting, which filters out all mail from anyone not on your white list. While this is certain to keep your in-box free of spam, it's also likely to clutter your Junk folder with legitimate messages.

Approve large groups. Adding recipients to your Address Book is a great way to exempt them from your Junk Mail filter. Trying to add everyone with whom you work can be tedious though. A simpler solution is to add an entire domain – that of your employer or school, for example – to your white list. To do this, open the Junk E-mail Protection window (under Tools), click on the Safe Domains button, and enter all approved domains, separated by commas.

Essential spam-fighting rules

Although statistical filters are much better at catching spam than manual rules, there are a few cases where adding your own rules can help catch spam your built-in filters might otherwise miss.

1. Look for spam headers. Some ISPs insert a hidden header – most often the X-Spam-Flag header – into messages they suspect are spam. To view these headers in Mail, choose View: Message: Long Headers; in Entourage, choose View: Internet Headers.

Although Mail knows to use these headers to help filter your mail, Entourage doesn't. You can add this capability with the help of a new Entourage rule (Tools: Rules: New). Choose Specific Header from the first If pop-up menu, type X-Spam-Flag into the text field that follows, and then select Exists from the second pop-up menu. (If your ISP uses a different flag, enter that header in place of X-Spam-Flag.) Under the Then section, specify where such messages should be moved.

2. Dump suspicious attachments. Attached files with extensions such as .exe, .pif, .scr, .bat, .com, .lnk, or .js are often Windows viruses or spyware programs. They may not harm your Mac (unless you're using Virtual PC), but they certainly won't do you any good. Mail's rules ignore attachments, but you can set up an Entourage rule to remove these attachments from incoming messages to a POP account (IMAP accounts don't offer this option).

If you subscribe to mailing lists, you can guarantee that mail from these lists isn't considered spam by using the Mailing List Manager (in the Tools menu). The Mailing List Manager not only helps you filter any related messages into a dedicated folder, but also ensures that any messages other members sent to the list make it through – regardless of whether the senders are in your Entourage Address Book.

Look for outside help. What if you've diligently trained your junk-mail filters and fully optimised your settings, but you're still getting a steady influx of spam? Your built-in filters simply may not be accurate enough to handle the problem – especially if you receive hundreds or thousands of spam messages every day. What you need is some external help.

Third-Party Software. One of our favourite add-on spam filters is Michael Tsai's SpamSieve, a powerful, accurate, and highly configurable statistical filter that works with Mail, Entourage, and other OS X e-mail clients. (It's also included with Bare Bones Software's Mailsmith). Whereas Mail and Entourage let you optimise a few basic settings on their spam filters, SpamSieve provides almost endless opportunities for customisation.

Mail users should also consider Benjamin Han's JunkMatcher software (see "Hot links"). JunkMatcher is a free Mail plug-in that lets users define wildcard patterns called regular expressions to identify spam characteristics that Mail's built-in filters could otherwise miss – such as intentionally misspelled words.

Keep spam in the can. Spam is on the rise. If you use your built-in tools wisely, remain diligent, and know when to ask for help, you'll remain ahead of the game. ☞

In Entourage, create a new rule; then choose Attachment from the first If pop-up menu and Name Ends With from the second. Enter the first extension (.exe, for example) and then click on Add Criterion and repeat the process for each extension you want to exclude. From the Execute pop-up menu, select If Any Criteria Are Met. In the Then section, choose Remove Attachments, add a second action, and choose Change Status from the first pop-up menu and Junk E-Mail from the second.

3. Stick to English. Sometimes messages that use non-Latin character sets, such as those written in Russian or Chinese, trip up statistical spam filters. If you don't read these languages, it's a safe bet that such messages are spam. To identify these messages, you need a rule that looks at the messages' Content-Type headers.

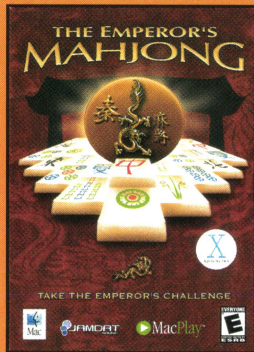
When creating this rule in Mail, choose Edit Header List from the If section. In the resulting dialog box, type Content-Type in the Header field, click on Add Header, and then click on OK. Change the Edit Header List pop-up menu to Content-Type, select Contains from the middle menu, and then enter the appropriate header in the text.

In Entourage, your If statement should read as follows: Specific Header Content-Type Contains appropriate Content Type header.

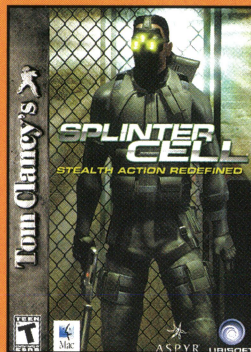
New Games for your Macintosh



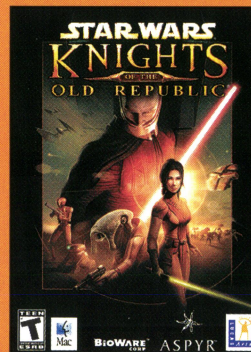
Battlefield 1942
Now Shipping – **\$69.95**



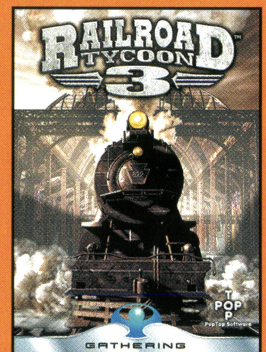
Emperor's Mah Jong
Now Shipping – **\$29.95**



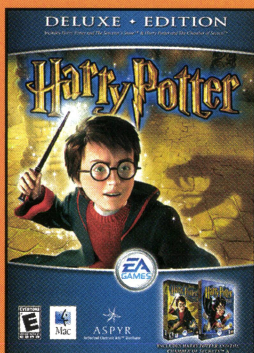
Splinter Cell
Due September – **\$59.95**



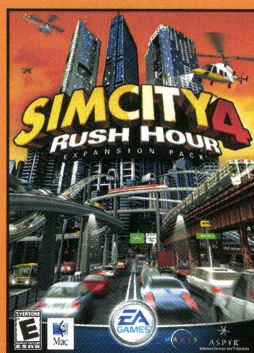
Star Wars Knights of the Old Republic – **\$69.95**



Railroad Tycoon 3
Due Mid Sept – **\$89.95**



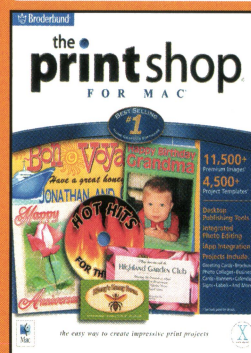
Harry Potter Deluxe Ed.
Due September – **\$69.95**



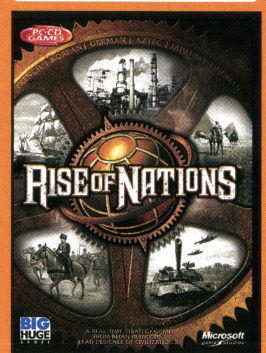
Sim City Rush Hour Exp.
Due September – **\$44.95**



MTX Motocross
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Printshop for OS X
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Rise of Nations
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007 Nightfire	\$49.95
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Age of Mythology	\$99.00
Alien Vs Predator 2	\$69.00
Alien Vs Predator Gold	\$19.95
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Emperor's Mahjong	\$29.95
Enemy Engaged	\$59.95
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The Sims - Livin' Large Expansion	\$44.00
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The Sims - Vacation Expansion	\$44.00
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Tom Clancy's Ghost Recon	\$59.95
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Total Immersion Racing	\$44.95
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Worms Blast	\$19.95
X2 Wolverine's Revenge	\$39.95
Zoo Tycoon	\$79.95
Zoo Tycoon - Marine Mania - Add on	\$49.95

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Please explain!

LAST month we revealed that the online banking web sites of three of Australia's major banks don't work well on Mac:

- BankWest's banking site doesn't work at all on Mac, and the bank blames the way Microsoft and Netscape have "implemented Javascript into their programming," advising customers to use "Bankwest Online Banking at their discretion."

- Westpac's "other accounts" feature requires Microsoft Java Virtual Machine, which is only available for Windows.

- It's impossible to log in to HSBC online banking using Safari because a redirection process from the login screen fails with a "no cookies" error.

Since then, we've asked the banks concerned to explain why Mac users are being treated as second class customers.

Unfortunately, the responses weren't very encouraging. Invariably, the banks' PR people welcomed questions from AMW on the phone but returned less helpful answers by e-mail after having consulted technical managers.

BankWest's Executive Corporate Affairs Manager Ray Jordan responded, in part: "currently Macs make up fewer than two per cent of the visits to our site and therefore it becomes a commercial decision to undertake major work to accommodate them."

However, he did continue to explain that BankWest was currently considering a major technology refresh for its online banking next year and that he expected the new platform to have better support for Macs.

We also asked Jordan if the bank considered it a risk that the only browsers it supported (Internet Explorer for Mac and Netscape) were now discontinued by their parent companies and no longer maintained with security updates. He responded: "we don't see the risks being significant for Mac users with non-supported browsers. We have seen no security incidents regarding Macs to date."

We were dumbfounded that a bank spokesman would take the view that there was no risk because it hadn't happened yet.

Westpac was slightly more apologetic for the problems on its site with Mac browsers, explaining that it was aware that its "other accounts" feature could only be used with Internet Explorer for Windows.

The bank's spokesperson, Julia Quinn, responded: "Westpac is conscious of the issues some of our users encounter when using non-Microsoft browser and operating systems combinations, such as the more recent versions of the Mozilla (Netscape/Firefox) browsers."

She said the bank had been working recently on achieving web standards and accessibility compliance, which was near completion. Encouragingly, she said "the next area of focus for us will be to ensure consistent usability across our web site and all its functions across a wider variety of browsers and operating systems."



Hot Links

www.hsbc.com.au/utility/contact/
Tell HSBC Mac users need banking too

She explained the reason the bank had prioritised W3C standards compliance above all else recently was that once all code was standardised, it should work in all browsers that were themselves standards compliant.

Finally, we sought answers from HSBC about how long it would take to fix its relatively simple page redirection problem that was preventing Safari users from accessing its site.

Spokesperson Victoria Garrod said "97 percent of our traffic is using Internet Explorer. We base our decisions on customer demand. We simply are not seeing demand for Linux, Safari, Opera etc. and cannot use our limited resources to certify every single browser that pops into the market place. We listen to our customers and keep a close eye on our server logs — so that if demand changes we can make sure we respond to this."

I argued to Garrod that server logs would be unlikely to show many people accessing the online banking web site with Safari, since it didn't work. She replied: "We are aware [that HSBC online banking doesn't work in Safari] as we do use Macs. We have simply not seen enough demand from our customers to warrant certification as most Mac users have IE or another browser and bank very happily."

I asked how customers could register their demand for Safari compatibility with HSBC, and she said customers should use the "Contact Us" option on the HSBC web site (see "Hot links"), or call the 24/7 call centre.

Given that the banks seem to be base their development efforts solely on customer demand, I encourage readers to contact them and report problems with online banking on Mac rather than hoping for the best.

Dealing with Mac-unfriendly banks. As with most problems Mac users encounter, incompatibilities with bank web sites can be overcome with a bit of fiddling.

HSBC can be made to work in Safari. At the point where the redirection stalls, if you select View Source in the View menu and cut and paste the target web address into Safari's address bar, then login will work and the site mostly works OK. It's simpler just to use Mozilla Firefox or one of the browsers recommended by the bank (Internet Explorer for Mac or Netscape)

If you think your internet banking has stalled, you can view progress of page loading in Safari by hitting ⌘-option-A. (Thanks to Martin Levins for the tip.)

Turn off pop-up blocking before using internet banking, as many banks use pop-ups to launch the online banking window. ☞

Dan Warne is passionate about the state of broadband in Australia.

10.2004

The Hub



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 SoundBridge
www.apple.com.au/airportexpress/
 AirTunes
www.neuston.com/en/home.asp
 Neuston Virtuoso
homepage.mac.com/jonassalling/Shareware/Clicker/
 Salling Clicker
www.mentorsurround.com/
 Mentor surround sound headphones



Of hi-fi and wi-fi

It hasn't been that long since *AMW*'s special issue dedicated to getting sound out of your Mac and into some decent speakers, but a lot changes in this market segment in a very short time. Over the past few months several significant devices have appeared in the Mac music space, including an offering from Apple itself. Accordingly, we felt it was worth another look.

The Express train. Even though there are some very good solutions out there for listening to iTunes via your home stereo, for many users the search starts and ends with Apple's own AirPort Express — Just because it's from Apple. It's also a very good solution, but it has its limitations.

AirPort Express is a wireless base station just like an AirPort Extreme, but it costs over \$100 less. Like an Extreme base station, Express can extend your network or add wireless capabilities to a wired network. It can also share a USB printer. What you miss out on is the Extreme's ability to handle 50 simultaneous users (Express handles only ten), a facility for adding external antennae and the ability to bridge from wireless networks to Ethernet.

What you gain is the nifty part: plug in a standard cable (or buy Apple's optional kit including high-quality Monster cable) and

plug the Express into your stereo or a set of powered speakers. Then you can listen to your iTunes library anywhere in the house with an Express plugged in. You have to be using iTunes 4.6 or later, which includes something called AirTunes that makes all this happen.

Setting up iTunes to send music to your AirPort Express is as simple as configuring your preferences. In the Audio section of iTunes preferences select "Look for remote speakers connected with AirTunes" and you're done.

You can toggle between the remote speakers or your Mac's speakers using the drop down at the bottom of the main iTunes window. You can also select "Disable iTunes volume control for remote speakers" if you are concerned about damaging your speakers by accidentally turning up iTunes too loud. The easy way around that is ensuring your stereo's volume control is not too high. Then you have full control from iTunes without doing any damage.

Of course, you can also use AirPort Express for wireless internet surfing at the same time. That's why there is a buffer to ensure the music keeps flowing when things are busy data-wise.

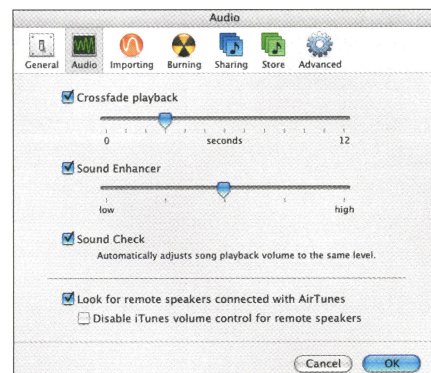
A typical AirPort Express setup might look like this:

1. Mac desktop with AirPort Extreme in one room.
2. AirPort Express connected to power point near stereo in lounge room.
3. An iBook sitting with you outside near the barbeque.

You could control your music from either the iBook or desktop Mac (or both with shared playlists). If you had a further AirPort Express connected to external speakers outside, you could toggle between the stereo in the lounge room and outside.

(If you really wanted to impress your friends and family with your wireless wizardry, how about controlling iTunes from your mobile phone or PDA? Salling Clicker (see "Hot links") achieves just that. It is fully AppleScript compliant and allows you to control a range of functions on your Mac,

continued on p. 46 ►





Surround sound and your Mac

Surround Sound has become a dominant format in audio over the past few years, particularly in relation to home cinema.

Basically, surround sound is an evolution of sound amplification options. The most basic is monophonic sound (no matter where you stand you hear everything recorded), then stereophonic (where there are two channels of audio so depending on where you stand you may hear different things). Then came the earliest attempt at surround sound: quadraphonic sound (four channels of audio encoded within the usual two stereo channels). The expense of quadraphonic gear and the evergreen issue of lack of format consensus meant it never took off in a big way.

The next evolution was Dolby Surround, which did deliver true surround sound but with the rear channel being passive (no ability to create "movement"). This led to the development of Dolby Pro Logic which improved things but sound from the rear was still effectively limited to directionality from rear left and right only.

The next step is 5.1 or 6.1 surround sound. It gets a little confusing here. 5.1 and 6.1 surround refer to the number of speaker locations. 5.1 surround adds further realism to sound effects "moving", as does the addition of a subwoofer channel (the ".1" of the title) to emphasise lower end frequencies. Anyone who's been to the cinema to see an action movie in the past five years will have noticed their body vibrate with the bass frequencies. The other five are speaker locations described

as front left, front right, front centre, surround left and surround right. 6.1 surround adds a further speaker at the rear for even greater realism.

5.1 surround sound systems have been the purchase of choice the past few years, but 6.1 systems are effectively the default if you are purchasing today. If you own a 5.1 surround system now, there doesn't appear to be a great need to upgrade to 6.1.

CDs or DVDs are encoded in the various surround formats (Dolby, DTS and SRS are the big players), and it requires hardware decoding to reproduce the desired effect. The hardware routes each channel to the appropriate speaker, and you then have your surround sound experience.

Surround headphones. Given the description above of how surround sound is configured, it doesn't seem logical that a set of headphones can reproduce a 360 degree sound experience. However, over the past year or so that's exactly what has been achieved.

One example is the Mentor range of Surround Sound Headphones. These headphones have six speakers built into each side. A key feature of this product is a proprietary technology called Safebass, which takes the bass frequencies from the front left and front right channels and merges them to a level that won't make your brain feel like it's going to vibrate out of your skull.

There are actually a number of models of which two are Mac compatible (you need



OS X 10.3 or later to get the surround sound experience from DVDs). The RCH100 (the larger version) and the RCH110 (more compact) come with a built in surround sound decoder, so the only connection required is from the headphones to the USB port on your Mac. The USB port provides both the audio routing and the power. If you are more interested in connecting surround headphones direct to your home theatre system then the RCH001 model may be the best choice as it comes with the appropriate cables, a built in amplifier/decoder and a remote control.

Whichever model you choose, be prepared for the unusual sensation of sounds moving around you — the effect is much more pronounced with the close proximity of headphones. I used the headphones connected to my Mac, and watched a Lord of the Rings DVD. I'm no audiophile, but if I wasn't listening to surround sound then it was an extremely good approximation.

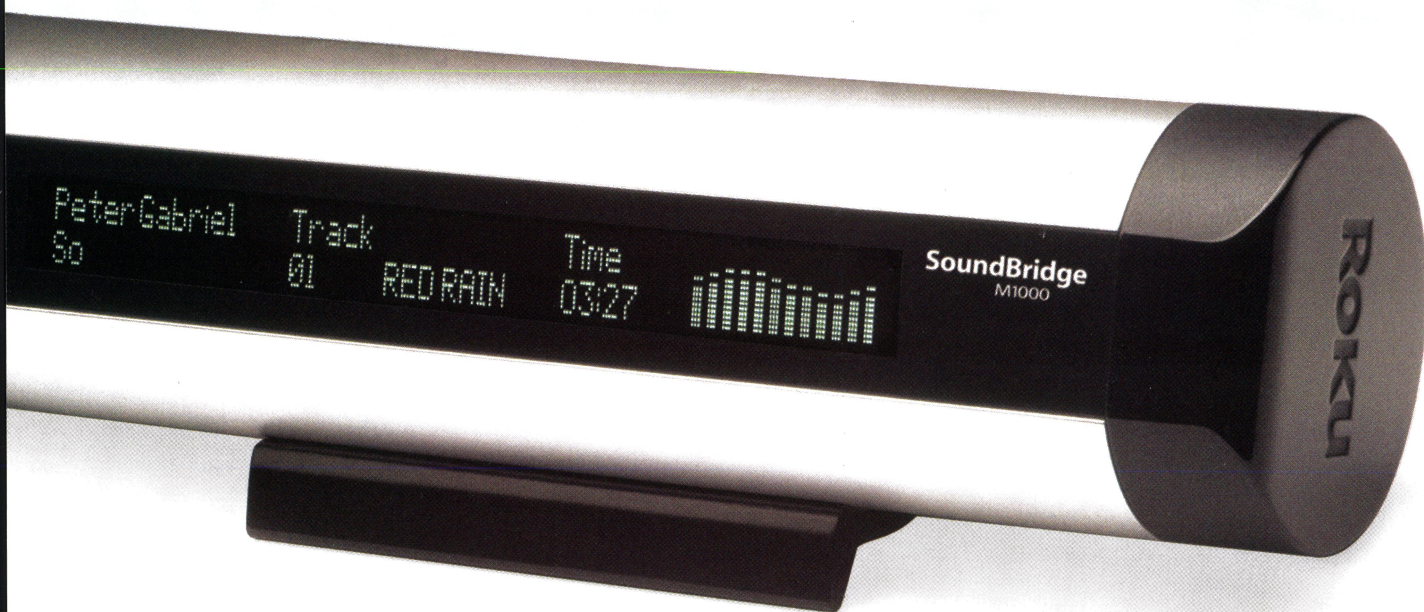
The price range these headphones fall into is the same as the higher-end stereo headphones, but there is a fair degree of bang for the buck, and of course stereo recordings will play back fine through surround headphones. The RCH 100 retails for \$289, the RCH110 for \$269. The Australian distributor is Conexus (02 9975 2799).

Surround speakers. If your Mac's in-built speakers aren't really giving you the best from your DVDs (and be honest, they're not), the easiest solution is to grab a set of surround-sound speakers.

One attractive option is the Logitech Z-680 5.1 surround system. For your money you get a centre speaker plus four satellite speakers and a subwoofer. The Z-680 has an impressive number of audio input options which means you could easily connect not only your Mac but your TV, video game console and so on. The Z-680 automatically detects the type of audio connection you have, and adjusts its settings accordingly. If you leave more than one sound source connected you can also manually switch between them as needed.

Connecting your Mac to the Z-680 depends on what sort of audio interface you have. Your Mac's audio-out port is fine, or you can use any USB or FireWire audio interface you may have. The only configuration necessary is selecting the Z-680 in your audio preferences if connected via USB or FireWire.

The control unit has an LCD display, volume button and a range of menu buttons. There is also a remote control supplied that mirrors all functions as well as the ability to test the speakers. The six speakers all connect using run of the mill speaker wire, which gives you maximum flexibility as far as placing your speakers: just buy more speaker wire if you need a larger layout. All speakers come with mounting brackets, which can be positioned in different configurations. The Z-680 set retails for \$699. Contact Logitech Australia for details on 02 9972 3711.



including iTunes. So in the case of the wireless household discussed above, you could be sitting outside changing songs in iTunes from your Bluetooth mobile phone. Then as you walk inside you change the sound input to the speakers in the lounge room).

The obvious downside with AirPort Express is the inability to control anything whatsoever on the device itself. Everything has to be done from the Mac (though the Salling solution above is some remedy). Ideally, though, you'd

want a device with an LCD screen and a dedicated controller to choose your tunes.

Bridging the gap. The Roku Soundbridge, which hit the market just before AirPort Express, is just such a device. It features an LCD and a remote control, though you can also select tunes using your Mac as with AirPort Express.

There are actually two models of the SoundBridge, the M1000 and M2000. The

primary difference between the two is that the M2000 is much larger, hence a larger display as well that could be read from across the room with little trouble. Like AirTunes, the SoundBridge just requires an audio cable connection from itself to your stereo or powered speakers. Roku has included an optical audio connection in addition to the usual analogue connection for those with higher-end home theatre systems.

The SoundBridge is fully compatible with iTunes and Rendezvous out of the box so getting things running is not a problem. The full gamut of sound file formats are covered except for AAC files purchased from the iTunes Music Store (not that that is an issue for us Australians). Any other AAC files work fine, as do MP3, AIFF and WAV. If you install the supplied SlimServer software, you have access to Windows Media, Apple Lossless, FLAC and Ogg-Vorbis formats as well.

As this issue went to press, Roku announced that it was adding full Wi-Fi capability to the SoundBridge. The one real downside to SoundBridge against AirPort Express was the latter's ability to extend your wireless home network — now Roku can do the same. For earlier versions of SoundBridge this capability is available as an add-on.

The increased feature set of the SoundBridge compared to AirTunes comes at a price. The SoundBridge M2000 retails for \$899 and the M1000 is \$550. Both should be available by the time you read

this. iTunes 4.0 or above is required. The Australian distributor is Vistra Systems (02 9212 0200).

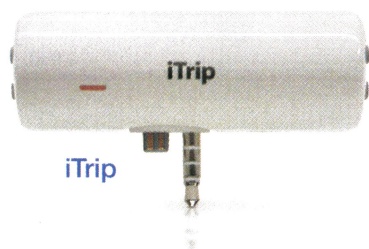
Virtuoso performance. The third cab off the rank is much more than just a wireless music streaming tool. The Neuston Virtuoso MC-500 covers video and photo in addition to audio. All I'll mention on the non-music side is that the MC-500 gives you the ability to playback a range of video file formats as well as iPhoto libraries. The unit itself is a sleek silver unit that looks a lot like a digital TV set-top box. On the music side, there is again full compatibility with iTunes, and all the main file formats are supported with Apple Lossless the only omission. Like the SoundBridge, all features are accessible from the unit itself. In this case the initial menu screen gives you the choice of streaming video, audio or photos and then you navigate from there. Firmware is updateable via internet download and a remote control is standard as well.

One standout worth noting is the user community surrounding the MC-500. Neuston runs a support forum from its web site and it's a lively, supportive one — comparable in many ways to some of the Apple user forums, which of course often discuss the AirPort Express. Roku also has a forum but it's a much more modest affair.

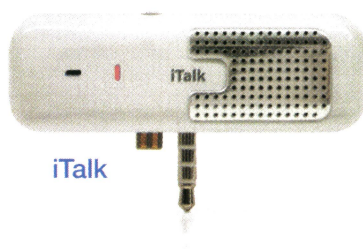
Overall, the MC-500 offers a significant alternative to the Apple branded product, and in this case you get a lot more than music files to stream. The MC-500 will set you back \$379. For more information contact Neuston's Australian division on 03 9513 9236.

The last word. All three of these options bring something unique to the table. If you are purely looking at audio streaming it's hard to go past the Roku SoundBridge. If full wireless networking is your preference then AirPort Express takes the honours for its simplicity and low price. The Neuston offering deserves kudos for offering video, photo and audio in the one package. ☞

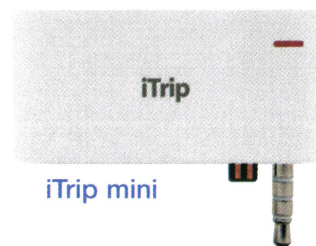
MemSol... iPod extras



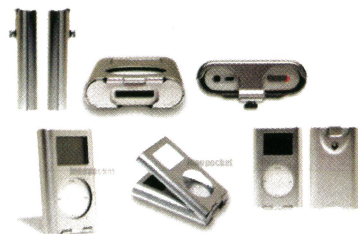
iTrip



iTalk



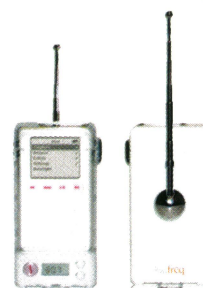
iTrip mini



iPod mini metal case



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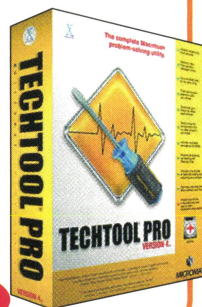
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Final Cut Pro plug-in
www.dvfilm.com/atlantis/
PAL to NTSC conversion

25fps / 29.7fps

Changing frames: PAL to NTSC conversion

ISN'T it wonderful to live in a world of fast, global media exchange? As many with friends or family overseas will likely have encountered, we still face the issue of incompatible world television standards. With field, frame rate, and tape speed differences, the conversion process between PAL and NTSC is no simple technical matter. So how do you do it?

For anyone looking for a one-off conversion, it is hard to find a video shop that doesn't offer standards conversion services. You're generally going to face a charge of around \$30-50 to get a video converted from one format to the other. So if you think you're going to want to do this more than a handful of times, it is well worth looking into getting your own equipment to do the job.

There are both hardware and software solutions available. We're going to offer a few options here that offer as little fuss as possible to get good results.

Hardware. Hardware solutions are generally much faster and simpler, but cost more money for the convenience. Generally, hardware solutions are made up of a conversion box that the source video is passed through to produce converted video as output in real-time. Almost every local conversion service provider will be working from hardware. Cheap units offer one-way conversion while more expensive units will offer not only both directions, but also cover other world formats such as SECAM.

There is an excellent conversion box from Emerson, the EVC-1595, which can be purchased online from retailers like Amazon for about \$US330. This box will convert digitally from almost any standard

to either PAL or NTSC. If money is no object, take a look at the equipment available from Snell & Wilcox. This is truly first class standards conversion.

Software. If you're already set up with an editing system, you can get cheaper results via software solutions. These require a little more effort and a lot more time for rendering. There is a quick and dirty solution available where, by dropping PAL footage into an NTSC timeline, or vice versa, you can get a fast conversion. This will result in bad frame rate conversions that lead to jerky results. If 'quick and dirty' is all you need, give this a try in your editing software of choice.

If you're looking for better results, there are plug-ins available to get the job done. The best plug-in for Final Cut Pro right now is G Standards Conversion, which you can get from Geoff Nattress's web site. Nattress has produced a range of widely acclaimed plug-ins, written in FX script specifically for FCP. At less than \$150 this is an excellent value option.

Other software available include Atlantis, from DVFilm, which is compatible with all QuickTime-based editing software. However this software can only perform PAL to NTSC operations at this time. Since most VCRs and DVD players sold in Australia handle NTSC as well as PAL playback, though, it may be all you need.

Some argue that you can get good results from effects software such as After Effects. Such conversions require a lot of tweaking effort, but if you already own the software you should definitely give this a try before purchasing another solution to see if you're happy with the results.

Hitting the target. Once the conversion has been performed, you need to produce an output appropriate for the target hardware you want the video to be viewable on. Note that tape speed is different between formats, so you can't just record NTSC video onto a tape on a PAL VCR and expect it to work. To output to VHS, you will need a deck that supports recording in NTSC.

You may also be interested in looking for a VCR with the ability to record in different formats. This means any video feed into such a deck can be recorded in either PAL or NTSC, making conversion a very simple procedure. Hardware units mentioned earlier simply change the signal — you still require somewhere to capture the signal in the appropriate record format. For an integrated conversion option there is the Samsung VS-5000W world conversion VCR, which retails at \$1499.

Alternately, formats such as DVD and miniDV do not have tape speed troubles of this kind. In digital formats, the data required by PAL and NTSC is exactly the same. So if you can output to one of these media formats, as long as you've performed the standard conversion adequately, you will be able to distribute the results to the appropriate people.

The last word. It is unfortunate to have to contend with all this hassle. If you're not up for it, you can stick with the widely available conversion services. With a lot of conversion work to do, that in itself could become a bigger hassle, so bite the bullet and get yourself up and running. After a couple of conversions you'll feel like you're sitting at the hub of the great global media exchange. ☞



Hot Links

www.apple.com.au/displays/
Really large screens

Is bigger better?

WITH the recent release of Apple's new 30" LCD monitors, we thought we'd cast a critical eye over just how much screen you really need to best work with video. No doubt we all covet the biggest screens on the market, but is bigger really better?

Working on a 12" laptop screen can get the same job done as working on a 30" LCD in the end. Wherein lies the advantage? Additional space is all about efficiency of workflow, allowing greater access to palettes and clearer views of timelines and previews. So if it's about efficient use of space you should be thinking outside of the screen as well. What is your physical workspace going to most benefit from? It may be that multiple monitors are going to be more beneficial to your workflow. They can be set on different angles or even different levels, allowing you to organise your work more spatially, rather than across one screen space. Some may find they are more organised

across multiple monitors than on one large screen. Separating palettes and tools from previews, bins

and timelines may help some editors mentally keep things in order. Others may find mousing across multiple screens desperately uncomfortable.

You also need to consider whether a preview TV monitor is a better use of space for your work process. Would you prefer to see your work previewed on a true TV screen rather than on a monitor? With the response time and contrast ratio of LCD still behind that of CRT screens, you do not receive accurate sharpness and clarity from an LCD just yet. Via a preview monitor you will see exactly how your final work will appear.



Keep in mind you can have a 20" and a 23"

Cinema display — or two 20" displays and a good quality preview monitor — for less than the price of the 30". So there is definitely a sound financial reason to considering multiple monitors.

Remember that what you do with your entire workspace is as important as how you organise the space you've got to work with on screen. If it's about how cool your set up looks, buy the 30" Cinema HD. No question. If you want to make your studio space to help your efficiency, think about your options. ☞

Motion putting moves on After Effects

AT last, Motion is available as part of Apple's line up of editing tools. As part of the new Production Suite package, it is clear Apple have framed Motion as the answer to all your real-time compositing needs. Apple also claims this is a complementary application to After Effects, not a replacement. Many do agree that there is still a bright future for After Effects on the Mac. Others feel this is simply an attempt to allay any concerns Adobe may have, but that the long-term future for AE is looking grim.

As of this first version release, there is most definitely still a place for After Effects for many users. If you're not planning on upgrading your system, the sheer hardware requirements are a big reason for sticking with or choosing After Effects over Motion. With a recommended system requirement of a dual 2GHz G5 with 2GB RAM, Motion actually seems to demand more power than Shake!

If you're looking at a system upgrade and you're picking up the Apple Production Suite as part of the deal, will you still need a copy of After Effects in the mix? As a package that makes it easy for editors to add compositing to their repertoire, Motion may quickly become the first and only choice of anyone who was converted to Final Cut Pro through its ease of use. Motion's real-time workflow and intuitive interface make it a breeze for anyone with editing skills to get started, while After Effects has a very steep learning curve. Motion is also all about speed of production in fast-paced work environments, so it will also quite possibly become a core tool for many fast turnaround edit teams. It is widely agreed that there is still a place for After Effects where more robust rendered compositing is required. Let's not forget, though, that Apple also has Shake covering the upper end of the

market. This now positions After Effects between two Apple products, covering whatever middle ground will remain. Not a small middle ground, but a ground that could potentially be squeezed out in coming years.

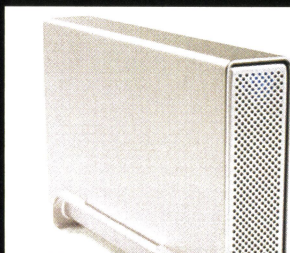
After Effects is no Premiere. It holds a central role in the motion graphics profession that means it will not be so easily swept aside. But with the packaging of the Production Suite effectively giving the software away, and its ability to work directly with Photoshop and After Effects plug-ins, Motion certainly looks set to take hold of a healthy portion of the motion graphics market. ☞



Hot Links

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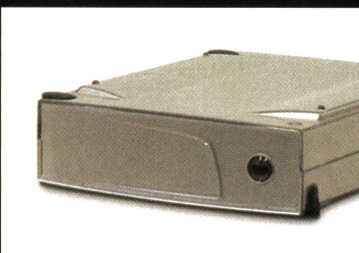
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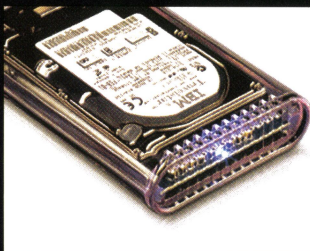


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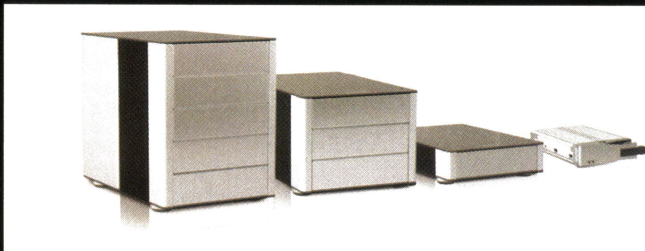
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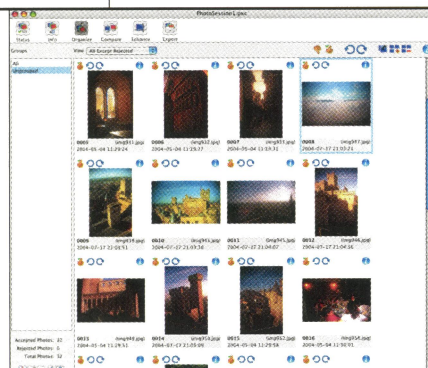
the professional side of digital photography, then managing the output and digital cameras is probably a pain. While one of the great things about iPhoto is that it allows you to handle large numbers of images, particularly JPEGs and TIFFs — up to the job of coping with the formats that several digital cameras (and some other digital cameras) don't handle. That's where PhotoFirst from Pixingo comes in handy.

As a professional solution, the latest version of PhotoFirst, now at 1.2, supports RAW formats from 24 digital cameras, including models from Canon, Nikon, Olympus and Sigma. Using the full photo-retouching capabilities of an application like Photoshop, PhotoFirst is actually more powerful than getting digital images from cameras and getting them into a format as quickly as possible. When you start the application, you start a session where you can input all the information about the set of images you're dealing with, such as the photographer's name, the date, etc. You can even save

PhotoSession templates so that you don't have to retype that information once it's on your system. When you start a PhotoSession, PhotoFirst keeps track of how long it's taken to process and manage the files so that you can itemise the time you've spent for a particular client, and then bill them accordingly.

PhotoFirst allows you to import photos one at a time as well as enabling you to choose a single folder and import all of its digital images. The great benefit with the RAW format support is that you can simply copy your images straight from the camera's solid-state media without having to go through the manufacturer's software to view those images — particularly handy if you're using cameras from different manufacturers.


When organising your images, PhotoFirst comes with a virtual light table that enables you to view thumbnails of all your imported images and adjust the orientation of these simply and easily. You can even flag which images you think are OK or flag the ones you'd like to reject. Another useful feature of PhotoFirst is that you can select two similar photos and compare them. In the compare mode, you can zoom to a spot and it will



iPhoto-like. PhotoFirst gets you sorting your RAW image files quickly using its virtual light table.

show the same magnification for both images at that spot. This is perfect if you've done a large photo shoot with the same subject and you want to pick the best image.

The application itself comes with the ability to apply colour adjustment curves, either to a single photo or to a group of photos all at once. A number of quite powerful preset curves come with the application, but you can create your own and save them for later use. You can even import Photoshop curves if need be. The other great benefit of PhotoFirst's image enhancement is that the edits are non-destructive and it's always possible to revert back to the original image.

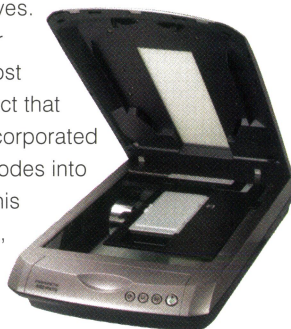
PhotoFirst can output to a number of different 8-bit and 16-bit formats, and supports ten levels of JPEG compression. At \$US125 for the downloaded version (\$US150 for the CD), Pixingo's PhotoFirst is ideal for professional photographers who want to organise their images for clients efficiently and quickly. 

Epson's scanner onslaught continues

In the last few months, Epson has been fleshing out its range of consumer-oriented scanners, with high-end and budget offerings. This month sees the arrival of Epson's mid-level photo-capable scanner, the Perfection 4180. The Perfection 4180 boasts an 1800dpi scanning resolution, it packs all the features of its big brother, the Perfection 4870 Photo. In short, there's still plenty on offer for the average person looking to digitise their collection of film-based


negatives, which helps to improve the speed of negative scanning by counteracting the brownish tinge found on most colour negatives.

Of particular interest for most users is the fact that Epson has incorporated three basic modes into the driver of this scanner: Auto, Home and Professional.



Rave near the guard's compartment. The Epson

This has been designed to help users sort out how they want to handle scanning their images. For less knowledgeable users, Auto provides an easy solution, while Home allows some control over the process, and Professional allows full control.

Priced at \$649, the Epson Perfection 4180 Photo gives high-resolution scanning capability at a reasonable price. 



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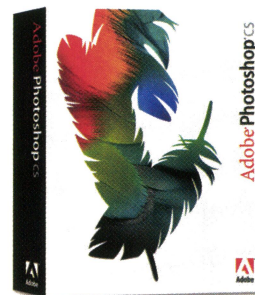
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David Harradine is a photographer, trainer and Adobe certified Photoshop CS expert. Since 2000 David has trained many of Australia's & New Zealand's leading photographers, graphic designers & scientific imaging professionals; in the ways of Photoshop, Digital Photography and Colour Management.

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| Session 2 11.10 - 12.30 | Ensuring we qualify the colour on our display systems CRT & LCD | - Lunch Time |
| Session 3 01.30 - 02.50 | Getting the most from the data from our scanner & digital camera | - Afternoon Tea |
| Session 4 03.10 - 04.30 | Soft Proofing, RGB and CMYK, for accurate results in print & the web | - Finish |

What people have said about David's previous seminars

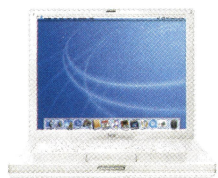
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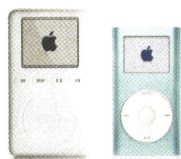
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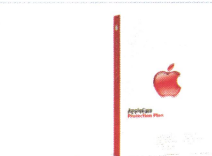
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Remote access

W ANNA spy on your neighbour? No, I'm not talking about spyware, I mean using Apple Remote Desktop to peek at what's on their screen, possibly taking over their mouse and controlling the machine from your own keyboard?

Curiously, this is the spin put on this software, now in its second release, by US demonstrators that first showed the product to me at NECC in New Orleans.

"Wouldn't you like to see what each student in your class was doing?" he gushed. Well, maybe, maybe not. In any case I could probably look directly at the screen as most of the classrooms I've inhabited have only taken a small time to walk across.

Despite the effusive salesperson, the second release of Apple Remote Desktop (ARD) provides some great new features, but has a few "gotchas" included, just to keep you on your toes.

It's not the only form of remote monitoring and control software out there. Netopia's Timbuktu is the old man of this tribe, with Virtual Network Computing (VNC) the Open Source alternative.

Where ARD dominates over both of these is its ability to go beyond the simple screen sharing and file transfer (although it is limited to network access whereas Timbuktu can dial up a suitably configured machine). Where it falls short is its single-platform use, but you can get around this as we'll see later.

Let's start with some basics. All that is needed for remote control is some sort of connection between the controller and the controllee, and a patch to allow input normally expected from a local keyboard and pointing device to be supplied by that connection, which will also relay screen display.

Sounds like a recipe for disaster, and it can be. Lots of Windows Trojan-like viruses (I've given up trying to distinguish Trojans from viruses) exploit these sorts of software provisions available in most operating systems. Of course, if such access is protected by a user ID and password, and this combination is encrypted to prevent malicious network eavesdropping, all should be well.

So, install ARD (or upgrade an earlier version over the network) and access to a target machine is granted only to authorised persons. However, each of these authorised persons will need to shell out for the administrator version of the product (around \$799 for the unlimited client version — the client is free)

You may think you need only one administrator, but there is a reason why your server should become an administrator as well.



Hot Links

apple.com/remotedesktop

Remote Desktop uncovered

sourceforge.net/projects/cotvnc/

Chicken of the VNC

ARD will collect information, distribute installer packages and run Unix commands on remote machines. Will you as administrator be there every time?

ARD installs a PostgreSQL database on the master computer, so, particularly if you are using mobile clients (and who wouldn't?) the server is probably the only machine that can be relied upon to be "there" when a laptop comes onto the network. So your server can wait around for this to happen, happily issue commands, collect information for a report, or upgrade software and you can go home.

Because ARD2 can see target machines outside its immediate network, you can check on progress, help out a stricken staff member or — yes — spy on the kids from home, if your institution's firewall allows.

This traversing of subnets is also useful if your network is segmented (ours is split between wireless and wired clients to contain traffic and make the wireless network a bit more efficient).

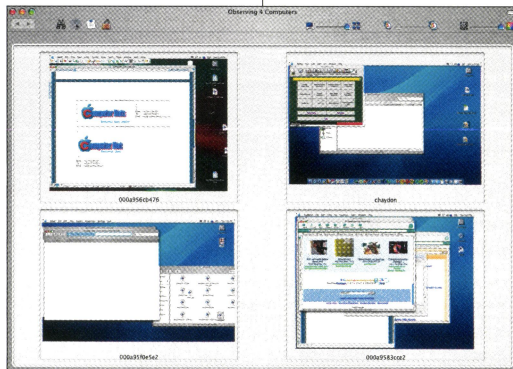
The importance of setting IP addresses and ranges is significant for easy setup. If your institution uses DHCP to set IP addresses, then a given machine may change from day to day and will be very difficult to track.

Similarly, it will make your management much easier if you allocate IP addresses in ranges so that, for example all library machines are between 192.168.1.1 and 192.168.1.100. You can then allocate these machines to a separate list rather than viewing them with all other machines on campus — the fewer machines you are targeting at the one time the more responsive your machine will be. When observing the "Main List" which shows all managed machines, the polling done by my machine meant that its network traffic went through the roof and made the management console fairly unresponsive.

If your desire is simply to monitor or control, you can use a free-ware VNC client such as "Chicken of the VNC" (yes it's really called that) to view screens. There is a security issue here as the passwords for VNC access are not protected by the same algorithms as ARD, so think before you configure a target machine's Remote Desktop with VNC access.

The best gotcha? ARD has ⌘-Q on its File menu, but if you type it whilst viewing a remote screen, you'll quit the application running on that machine, not yours. ☹

As an educator, Martin Levins likes empowering people to create using computing technologies.



create:

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By James Christopher Murty.

*Remotely repair
and maintain your system*

Remote control sysadmin

MY role as an independent IT consultant requires an immediate response to my clients' computer related issues. Potentially this means that I have stop what I am doing and travel to the site of the problem – which is fine if that happens to be across the room. But when the problem is in another building, or across town, I use will initially try to use remote system administration techniques to save time and travel.

This article deals with the three most common issues I get asked to resolve that can be dealt with from a remote location. Issues like performing OS updates, dealing with crashes, and some disk related issues. This may well be of interest to you if you are that person in your family or office who gets those calls and would like the luxury of being able to solve these problems from the comfort of wherever you are. Most of these have a GUI that can be walked through over the phone, but often it is more convenient for you fix the problem directly.

All of the following suggestions will work directly on your local computer or on a remote computer through the use of the ssh (secure shell) command. In order to perform these operations remotely you're going to need have the ssh daemon (a Unix term for background processes) running on the remote computer and access to an admin user.

If the remote computer is somewhere on the internet behind a firewall, the firewall will need to be configured to allow remote access to sshd (TCP port 22). If the remote computer is on the same network as you then all you need to do is go to System Preferences, open the Sharing pane, then click on Remote Login under Services to enable sshd.

As for admin user access, I tend to configure an Administrator (sysadmin) user on every machine I set up or need to maintain. I highly recommend the use of strong passwords for this and every user of the computer – particularly if it is accessible via the internet. By strong I mean no names, no birthdays, and no words that are likely to be found in a dictionary of any language. Combinations of upper and lower case letters and numbers are best. It is easy to come up with a mnemonic of between 8 and 12 characters that is both easy to remember and hard for anyone else to guess.

Software updates. Many people are confused by the frequent updates that come out, or have switched off the reminder dialog, or as a non-admin user, simply aren't aware that the updates are there. Many of these updates – in particular the security updates – are

**Hot Links**www.macfixit.com

Check here before installing system updates

important and should be installed. Personally, I tend to wait a couple of days and check the various Mac sites such as Macfixit (see "Hot links") so that I can read others' experiences before I install major updates on production computers.

The command line tool for checking and installing available software updates is called `softwareupdate`. To get it to check what updates are available, simply type `softwareupdate -l` or `softwareupdate -list` in a Terminal window. If everything is up to date you'll get a message telling you so. If updates are available you will see a list. An entry in this list will look something like:

```
! SecUpd2004-08-09Pan-1.0
    Security Update 2004-08-09, 1.0, 5380K
[required] [restart]
```

This is telling you the name of the update, its size and whether a restart will be required. Updates that require restarts will obviously require negotiation with the computer's user as to a suitable time to do so. This can be done by the remote user via the GUI or by you remotely.

To install a specific update (using the above listing as an example) you can type `sudo softwareupdate -i SecUpd2004-08-09Pan-1.0`. You can list other updates to install on the same line by entering a space and the short name of that update. While the items are being installed you'll see a progress indicator and if a restart is required it will remind you

```

Last login: Wed Aug 18 01:09:45 on ttty1
Welcome to Darwin!

[atom] ~> ssh sysadmin@fileserver
sysadmin@fileserver's password:

Last login: Mon Aug 16 22:36:41 2004 from 192.168.1.15
Welcome to Darwin!

fileserver:~ sysadmin$ softwareupdate --list

Software Update Tool
Copyright 2002-2003 Apple Computer, Inc.

Software Update found the following new or updated software:

! iPod2004-08-06-3.0.2
  iPod Updater 2004-08-06, 3.0.2, 10092K [required]
! Java142Update1-1.4.2 Update 1
  Java 1.4.2 Update 1, 1.4.2 Update 1, 27020K [required] [restart]
! MacOSXServerUpdate10.3.5-10.3.5
  Mac OS X Server Update, 10.3.5, 43472K [required] [restart]
! SecUpd2004-08-09Pan-1.0
  Security Update 2004-08-09, 1.0, 5380K [required] [restart]
* AirPortSW-3.4.1
  AirPort Software, 3.4.1, 9152K [restart]
fileserver:~ sysadmin$

```


after the install is complete. It is also possible to install all of the available updates instead of listing them individually by typing `-a` after the `-i` flag.

You can restart the computer from the command line if necessary using the `shutdown` command. For example if you type `sudo shutdown -r` now, the computer will quit all open applications and reboot within a few seconds. If someone is using the computer when you do this they will not be prompted to save – everything will just quit.

If you need to specify a specific time for the reboot you can type something like `sudo shutdown -r 2305` to make the computer shutdown at 11:05 pm or `sudo shutdown -r +60` to make it restart in an hour.

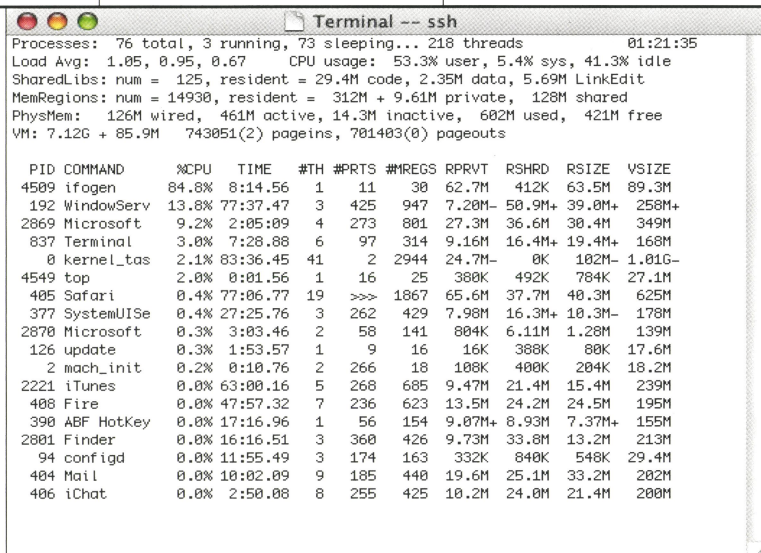
Dealing with crashes. Sometimes things go wrong with the applications and daemons that are running on a computer. With Mac OS X, things are a lot better than they've ever been in this regard as the OS handles badly behaved processes pretty well. Most of the time it will shut them down before they can do any damage. Sadly however you will still have the rare "hard crash" or runaway process – that the OS is unable to detect – that hogs the CPU resulting either in a complete crash of the gui or the gui slowing down to the point where the computer is no longer responsive enough to take any corrective action.

Fortunately on those rare occasions there's a fair chance that you can `ssh` into the computer from another and either find and stop the offending process, or in the worst case, restart the OS more gracefully than by pulling the power cable, punching the restart button, or holding in the power button until the computer powers off.

If you are able to connect to the machine successfully, first try using the `uptime` command to see how much load the CPU is under. `uptime` will return the length of time since the computer was booted and the last minute, five minute and fifteen minute CPU load averages. On a computer that isn't doing much, you'll see values less than 1, for a machine under normal working conditions you'll see values from 1 to 2. If you are seeing really big values like 10, then something is probably wrong.

The `top` command will list of all the running processes. To identify the offending process, use the `-u` flag to sort the list by CPU usage, and in order to avoid exacerbating the problem, ramp down the frequency of the update of the list by using the `-s` flag. Try typing something like `top -u -s5` to make the list update every five seconds. Odds are the offending process will be right at the top and using 95 percent or more of the CPU.

If this is the case you can try killing the process using the `kill` command with the process identifier (PID) that's listed at the left most of the list produced by the `top` command. So for example if your rogue process had a PID of 3276 you could try typing `sudo kill 3276`. Use the `top` command again to see if the process has stopped, and if the `kill` command didn't work try `sudo kill -9 3276`. The first variation is more polite and simply asks the process to stop itself, the `-9`



Terminal -- ssh

Processes: 76 total, 3 running, 73 sleeping... 218 threads 01:21:35
 Load Avg: 1.05, 0.95, 0.67 CPU usage: 53.3% user, 5.4% sys, 41.3% idle
 SharedLibs: num = 125, resident = 29.4M code, 2.35M data, 5.69M LinkEdit
 MemRegions: num = 14938, resident = 312M + 9.61M private, 128M shared
 PhysMem: 126M wired, 461M active, 14.3M inactive, 602M used, 421M free
 VM: 7.12G + 85.9M 743851(2) pageins, 781483(8) pageouts

PID	COMMAND	%CPU	TIME	#TH	#PTS	#MREGS	RPRVT	RSHRD	RSIZE	VSIZE
4509	ifogen	84.8%	8:14.56	1	11	30	62.7M	412K	63.5M	89.3M
192	WindowServ	13.8%	77:37.47	3	425	947	7.20M	50.9M+	39.0M+	258M+
2869	Microsoft	9.2%	2:05:09	4	273	801	27.3M	36.6M	30.4M	349M
837	Terminal	3.0%	7:28.88	6	97	314	9.16M	16.4M+	19.4M+	168M
0	kernel_tas	2.1%	83:36.45	41	2	2944	24.7M-	0K	102M-	1.01G-
4549	top	2.0%	0:01.56	1	16	25	380K	492K	784K	27.1M
405	Safari	0.4%	77:06.77	19	>>>	1867	65.6M	37.7M	40.3M	625M
377	SystemUIS	0.4%	27:25.76	3	262	429	7.98M	16.3M+	10.3M-	178M
2870	Microsoft	0.3%	3:03.46	2	58	141	804K	6.11M	1.28M	139M
126	update	0.3%	1:53.57	1	9	16	16K	388K	80K	17.6M
2	mach_init	0.2%	0:10.76	2	266	18	108K	400K	204K	18.2M
2221	iTunes	0.0%	63:00.16	5	268	685	9.47M	21.4M	15.4M	239M
408	Fire	0.0%	47:57.32	7	236	623	13.5M	24.2M	24.5M	195M
390	ABF HotKey	0.0%	17:16.96	1	56	154	9.07M+	8.93M	7.37M+	155M
2801	Finder	0.0%	16:16.51	3	360	426	9.73M	33.8M	13.2M	213M
94	configd	0.0%	11:55.49	3	174	163	332K	840K	548K	29.4M
404	Mail	0.0%	10:02.09	9	185	440	19.6M	25.1M	33.2M	202M
406	iChat	0.0%	2:50.08	8	255	425	10.2M	24.0M	21.4M	200M

variation is a less subtle instruction to the OS to kill the process immediately.

If all else fails, you can restart the machine using the `shutdown` command as discussed in the previous section.

Disk related issues. One of the most common problems – particularly with an older computer upgraded to Mac OS X – is running out of disk space. Mac OS X, much more so than Mac OS Classic, operates poorly when available disk space becomes scarce, and once these problems start appearing it can be very difficult to remedy from the GUI.

Once you connect to the remote host, type `df -h` to get a list of all the volumes connected to the computer. The relevant ones are the boot drive, which is mounted at `/`, and any additional drives or partitions mounted at `/Volumes/`. The list produced by `df` will show you the capacity of the drive, the amount used, the amount free, and the capacity as a percentage. As a general rule if the drive is at 90 percent or more capacity, there is too much data on the drive. If the drive gets above 95 percent capacity, odds are the user of that computer is starting to experience major problems.

To identify which folders are using up all the disk space, `cd` to the problem volume by typing something like `cd /`

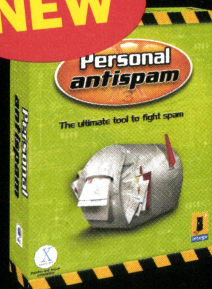
Once there, type `sudo du -Pshx *` to produce a list of the total sizes of all the folders at that level. This command will take some time to execute as it needs to dig through the entire file system to add up all the file sizes. Next, `cd` to the offending directories and repeat the `du` command until you identify any redundant files. Once located, you can delete them using the `rm` command. You will probably need to use `sudo rm -r <file or directory>` however you should always use this command with a great deal of caution.

A word of warning. I should point out – as it has probably already occurred to you – that many of these commands could be used maliciously. Obviously you would never do this, however it is extremely important to take great care when using the above suggestions as well intentioned but misused commands can have dramatic and undesired results if you are not cautious. ☹

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By Sean McNamara.

It's an ex-FireWire drive

Help folder

We answer our readers' questions

Each month Channelworx (1300 883 882) gives a copy of Dantz Retrospect Desktop (valued at \$259) to the Australian Macworld reader who submits the most intriguing Help folder query.

Retrospect Desktop is the #1 home and small office backup software for Macintosh. Don't rely on manual drag-and-drop to protect your data — it misses important files, is performed sporadically at best, and cannot restore older or deleted files. Retrospect allows you to easily set up complete, scheduled backups of three networked Macintosh, Windows, or Red Hat Linux desktop and notebook computers. Client licenses are available to protect additional computers. The product CD contains both Retrospect 6.0 for backing up to Mac OS X (10.1.5 through 10.3 "Panther") and Retrospect 5.1 for backing up to Mac OS 9.

Send your query to matthew.powell@niche.com.au for consideration for Help folder. Include your full mailing address to be eligible to win Retrospect Desktop.

All queries and solutions are the sole property of Niche Media.

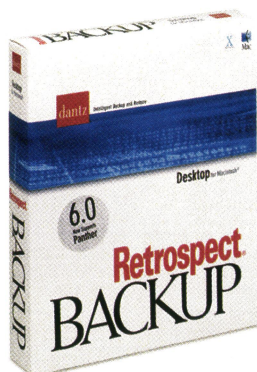
■ Sean McNamara is a Sydney-based consultant trading as MacAssist.



Hot Links

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American supplier of power supplies
www.alsoft.com/DiskWarrior/index.html
DiskWarrior
docs.info.apple.com/article.html?artnum=93208
iChat ports
docs.info.apple.com/article.html?artnum=58514
Knowledgebase article on Network Address Translation

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1

■ I recently heard a great idea: archive all of the data from a video job up to a FireWire drive, a new drive for each job, always "online" — very neat! So I purchased a Metal Gear 250GB Firewire drive and archived the job. Sweet. 230GB archived just like that.

My client wants a bit of a highlights video from the job, no problem, I plug the drive back in and start working from it, just pulling some basics, music, logos and a bit of video when my video editing software decides it cannot see the files on the drive. I open the drive and I can see them all. Run Norton's — yep there are problems. Run Disk Utility and my system goes to the screen of death. Reboot. The drive is no longer recognisable.

Gone, all of it. All 230GB, just like that.

That neat idea of archiving to FireWire drives is great, as long as you use multiple drives. I am now scared to plug in any of my FireWire drives as this is not the first time it has happened with a FireWire drive. Is it the hardware or is it a Mac OS X issue?

*Tony Gay
St Kilda, Victoria*

What a catastrophe, Tony! If you still have the drive in its current state, I'd try DiskWarrior (see "Hot links"), which you should be able to pick up at your local Mac store. Although it's not a certain thing, I've seen DiskWarrior recover disks the other utilities can't repair (and sometimes can't see). It even sometimes

allows you to copy data from a drive it can't repair. You may also have luck with a data recovery service, such as the one Xyber (02 9976 7976) offers.

I have seen FireWire drives die like this, and not just in Mac OS X, but also in Mac OS 9. I've never seen an adequate description of where the problem is, so unfortunately I can't give you any guidance on that.

The fact that FireWire can go belly up like this brings us to the next issue I wanted to cover — archives are not backups. This isn't meant as a "you should have known better" lecture, Tony, but it's important to reiterate the absolute necessity of backing up.

No matter what, you should always have at least two copies of data you can't afford to lose. When you back up your data, you are creating that second copy. If you archive data (move it to another device and delete the original), you're left with only one copy.

So, although moving data off your machine seems like a good idea, it does leave you vulnerable if that one copy goes belly up, as you've found. Archiving is OK if you archive two copies, and you can further reduce your risk by archiving to two different media (for example, FireWire HD and DVD or tape drive). That spreads the risks that any one technology will have recurring problems.

2

■ I just started a new job and have to look after the backup system. The company was running Retrospect in Mac OS 9 but has upgraded to Retrospect v.5.1 for Mac OS X, and I'm having trouble reading the old backup CDs — Mac OS X is asking me to initialise the disks **A**).

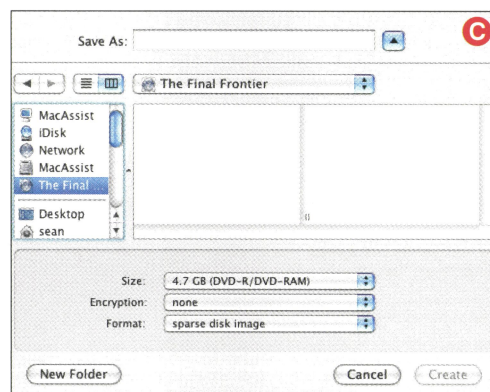
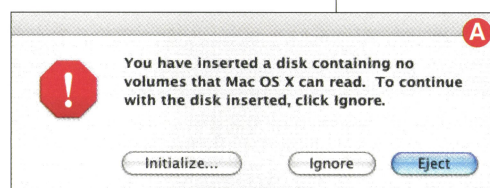
Also is there a way of limiting the backups to a particular size and then to start backing up to another file when it reaches that size? For example I'd like all the backups to fit onto a 4.7Gb DVD for offline storage, but am finding that some of the backups end up being over this size limit.

Patrick Tam
via internet

The behaviour you mention, Patrick, is perfectly normal — Mac OS X is seeing that the CD hasn't been finalised and that it's a CD-R/CD-RW disk, so it would like the opportunity to initialise it, but we don't want it to initialise or eject it, so you should just press Ignore. That leaves the CD in the drive ready for Retrospect to access it.

Alternatively, leave the CD out until Retrospect requests it, and then put it in — either way, Retrospect will see the disk as needed **B**.

The only way to limit the size of the backup is to use a backup set of the "File" type on a disk which is of the size you want to be limited to. You could repartition your hard disk so that you have a 4.7GB partition for backing up to, but let's be a little more efficient than that — let's make a 4.7GB disk image which is auto-loaded at login, to which



the backups are performed.

Once the disk image is full, burn the backup file to a real DVD and start again by doing a Recycle Backup to the File backup set. To make things extra efficient, we'll make it a sparse disk image (if using Mac OS X v10.3), which only takes up as much room on your hard disk as data in it, so if the backup file is only 100MB, that's the size of the disk image (plus some housekeeping overhead). As the backup file increases in size, so too does the disk image file size.

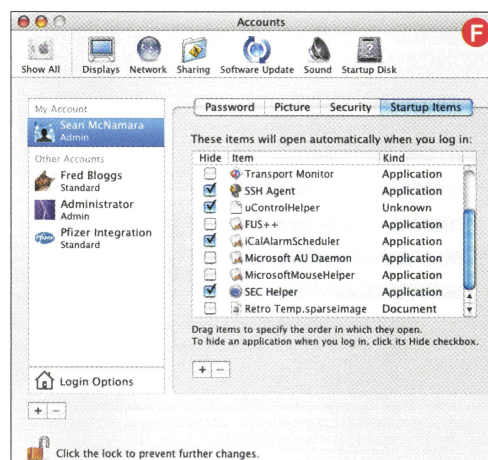
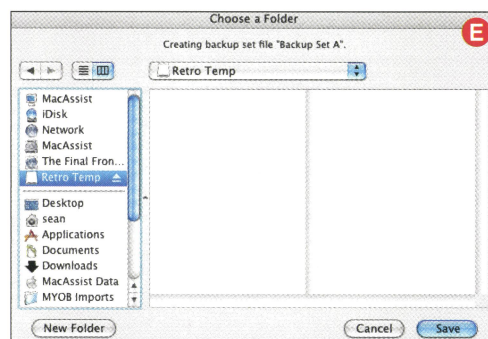
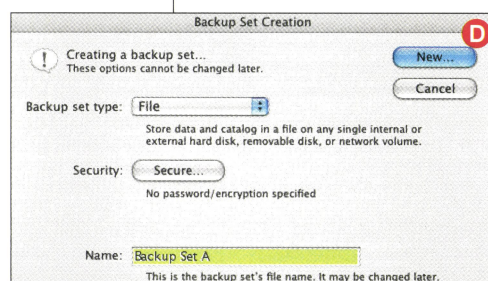
First, set up the disk image. In Mac OS X v10.3, open Disk Utility (in Applications: Utilities), and click on the New Image icon in the toolbar. In the Size popup menu, choose "4.7 GB (DVD-R/DVD-RAM)", and in the Format: popup, choose "sparse disk image". Choose a location for the disk image, and give it a name, then

click "Create"

C. The disk image will be formatted and mounted.

In Retrospect, set up your backup script as normal, but when setting up the Destination, create a new Backup Set, choose "File" as the backup set type, and give it a name, then click "New..." **D** — click on the mounted disk image (not the disk image file) in the next dialog to store the backup set inside the disk image **E**. Retrospect will now backup your files into that file in the disk image.

To auto-mount the disk image, drag it into the Startup Items tab in the Accounts pane of System Preferences **F** — this will make sure the disk image is mounted on login and available for the backup. In earlier versions of Mac OS X, the disk image is created using



the "Disk Copy" utility (which doesn't do sparse disk images, just choose "Mac OS Extended" as the image type after typing \mathbb{N} in Disk Copy), and to be auto-loaded at login, the disk image file needs to be dragged into the Login Items System Preferences pane in Mac OS X v10.2 and the Login Items tab in the Login System Preferences pane in Mac OS X v10.0 and v10.1.

Otherwise you're stuck with backup up to DVDs directly from Retrospect, or making a File backup of any arbitrary size on HD, which is then itself backed up to multiple DVDs.

Plugless

3

■ I unfortunately tripped over my iBook power cord while it was plugged in to both my iBook and the wall (stupid, I know). I appear to have snapped off the inner shaft of the round DC connector, converting my iBook into a big white paperweight.

Seeing as the whole power supply unit will cost big bucks to replace and that only the end connector is damaged, I tried searching for just the replacement jack connector. I have been unable to find the part. Do you have any ideas to what my options are apart from buying a whole new power supply?

*Simon Meyer
Highett, Victoria*

I spoke to the friendly people at Xyber here in Sydney, Simon, and they have also looked for replacement jacks for these power supply. Unfortunately, they have been unsuccessful in finding any.

I'm guessing that they are reproducible, as Fosh is selling a 12-volt power adaptor for iBooks and PowerBooks (see "Hot links"), but presumably, the manufacturer of that power supply has economies of scale to make the fabrication of these plugs worthwhile in a way a spare parts manufacturer would not.

As Xyber told me, these things aren't made to be repairable — along with CD/DVD drives and many other consumer electronics these days. It looks like you're up for the cost of a replacement power supply.

You may be able to locate a cheaper third party power supply similar to this one available from America (see "Hot links") — but make sure they are properly rated for Australia.

Network vs not work

4

■ I am a senior secondary Media Studies teacher and I run six eMacs networked to a Power Mac for students to make short video productions using iMovie 4, Final Cut Pro 4, GarageBand, iTunes, etc. and, apart from the occasional conflict, the system works well considering how it gets hammered by up to 250 students a year. The problem is the rest of the school works with PCs on a Novell network and our technicians say that Macs and Novell don't mix!

The techie wants to send individual student files down the line to be stored on the Novell server. Given the average project is 2-3GB I can't see this working with six machines operated by impatient teenagers trying to access full-screen full-motion video files. Would it be wise to put in an xServe somewhere along the line? In fact is it at all possible to set up such a shared network given the huge demands of video files?

*Harry Postema
Adelaide, SA*

One of the major problems you'll face, Harry, is bandwidth, as you've rightly conjectured. You could put in an xServe with a Gigabit Ethernet network serving the machines — but the eMacs are 10/100BaseT only, and I wouldn't want to run video editing over 10/100BaseT with impatient teenagers. It might end up being forced upon you, but I'd resist if I were you.

What I would do is use the server currently available, or an xServe, to backup the data files, but not use them for real-time access. This will help prevent the sort of data loss suffered by Tony Gay (see "It's an ex-FireWire drive"). If your IT department is mainly looking for data integrity, that should satisfy that requirement without your students suffering a performance hit.

The joy of chat

5

■ We recently purchased two iSight cameras with a view to using this technology to enhance human contact between staff and far away students in the one-to-one or potentially one-to-few fortnightly sessions where both ends have broadband in their workplace.

The problem is that setting up iChat 2.1+ on Panther 10.3.4 in Australia seems like a fly by your seat process. Within our LAN Rendezvous worked brilliantly. Through TCP/IP there is no clear support. Where can I get a rundown on setting up iChat with iSight across TCP/IP and firewalls?

In particular, do I assume that the 'login.oscar.aol.com' port 5190 are pretty much set, so that the main issue would be the optional proxy set up? Any pointers would be great. We are using AIM screen names.

*Kurt Seemann
Coffs Harbour, NSW*

Given the popularity of iChat and iChat AV, Kurt, it's not surprising that Apple have a couple of KnowledgeBase articles which deal with just this problem. In "Hot links" you'll see URLs for an article outlining the ports you need to open (and some tips on how to do it and background information on the networking issues involved) and another with some further information on Network Address Translation.

It's obviously in Apple's interests to publish this information so that as many people as possible can utilise the iChat technology. Try the suggestions in these articles (or pass them on to your IT department) and I think you'll be iChatting with the outside world in no time flat.

Reader tip

Microsoft Reader tip

I bought some DVD-RWs, but my Superdrive-equipped iBook promptly spat them back out at me. I discovered that my SuperDrive (a "MATSHITA UJ-825") is indeed a CD-RW/DVD-RW but Apple's custom-written firmware cripples this functionality.

I have found an answer that does not involve dodgy firmware upgrades. Get a friend with a DVD-RW on a PC to write something onto the disc. This will mount on your Mac just fine, and Toast will then erase it and from then on it can be used like any DVD-RW!

*John Doyle
via internet*

I've checked with Apple on this, and been told that Toast ought to be able to use DVD-RWs in any of its SuperDrives. For helping those who have this problem and a PC-using friend to help them around it, John gets a mouse.

For next issue, the first reader who sends in a solution to John's problem that doesn't involve asking the Dark Side for help will, with a bigger, yet to be decided, prize.

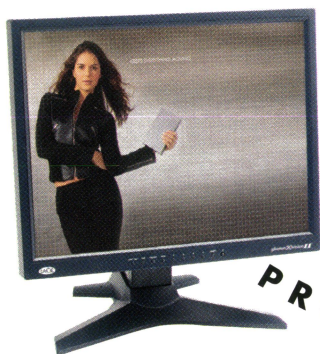


Each month, Microsoft gives a free Notebook Optical Mouse valued at \$70 to the Australian Macworld reader who submits the best tip. Sized for mobility and designed to be noticed, Microsoft Notebook Optical Mouse offers great comfort for either hand and is always good to go. E-mail your tip, together with your name, address and phone number, to matthew.powell@niche.com.au. All reader tips published become the sole property of Niche Media.

LaCie Electron 19 IV Blue CRT
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LaCie Electron 22 IV Blue CRT
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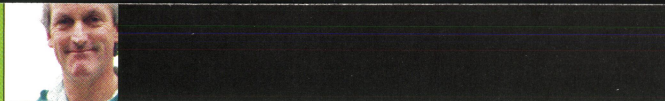


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Double quick time

QuickTime for Filmmakers sees photographer, filmmaker and media professor Richard K. Ferncase uncover these powers. Although the focus of this book is QuickTime Pro, there is some discussion of the many applications which depend on QuickTime for their functionality.

The first three chapters set the scene with an introduction to the QuickTime player and its various components, along with a brief history of film, which underpins the current paradigm shift from analogue to digital. Then it's down to basic editing with QuickTime Pro, first getting used to tracks and then using masks, video effects and other graphics modes. In a discussion of the vital issue of compression, Ferncase analyses the strengths and weaknesses of the various video and audio codecs that ship with QuickTime Pro as well as looking at the more powerful capabilities of Discreet Cleaner.

QuickTime Virtual Reality [QTVR] gets a working over through a series of tutorials in which the author retraces in detail his experiences in preparing a QTVR interpretation of prehistoric stones in the wilds of Scotland. Interactivity is his next topic, once again dealt with in tutorial format, with a step-by-step creation of a QTVR skinned movie with wired buttons, hot spots, and text. Then follows an examination of the various options for distribution and exhibition — CD-ROM, DVD and the web. The final chapter is described as "a brief roundup of some of the more useful software and shareware available for the QuickTime filmmaker".

The CD-ROM supplements the information in the book and contains examples of films prepared for delivery via QuickTime. This book is worth a look for anyone serious about digital film, from iMovie dabblers to Final Cut aspirationalists.

Interactive QuickTime — Authoring Wired Media

by neuroscientist Matthew Peterson takes QuickTime up another notch. The approach is again essentially project-based with a focus on the interactive aspects of QuickTime. Most of the projects have been created in Live Stage Pro [LSP], a trial version of which is included on the CD-ROM. You are expected to have at least a basic knowledge of audio, video and how to manipulate media files. Although you don't need a programming background, coded examples are what the book's all about.



Hot Links

www.apple.com/quicktime
Go right to the source

The book is divided into six parts comprising several short chapters that you can complete in one go. In many topics Peterson provides the historical setting and the philosophy behind the code, as well as looking at common pitfalls and alternative implementations. At the end of each chapter are a number of "explorations" for you to go and try on your own.

Part one deals with the basics of interactive QuickTime, part two shows you how to add interactivity to existing movies while part three takes you into the minute details of the world of sprites. Part four shows you what you can do with user interfaces while part five does multimedia — audio, video, MIDI, text, Flash and QTVR.

The last section examines how QuickTime communicates with the outside world.

Not for the fainthearted or code shy, *Interactive QuickTime* takes you right inside the QuickTime engine room. The book could also serve as a general introduction to interactive programming and would find a home in school and college libraries as well as on the bookshelves of digital media companies.

QuickTime Toolkit — Volumes One and Two

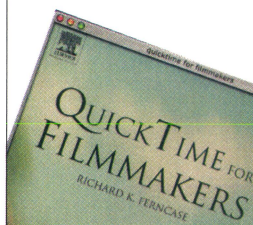
by Tim Monroe are for the most serious QuickTime developers. Volume One — *Basic Movie Playback and Media Types* — begins the journey into QuickTime programming, and Volume 2 — *Advanced Movie Playback and Media Types* — takes you deeper into video effects, skins, Flash, and QTVR. You'll also learn how to capture movies from sound and video inputs, how to broadcast movies, and how to play movies

full screen. Written especially for software developers new to the QuickTime application programming environment, the book nevertheless assumes you're familiar with QuickTime as a multimedia tool. Read these two books from end to end, so the promise goes, and you'll have the skills and expertise to create professional-quality QuickTime applications.

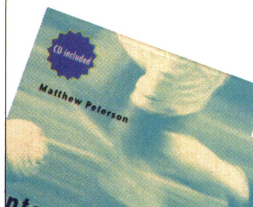
The accompanying CDs contain the source code and project files. Complete with numerous eminently usable examples these two volumes will tell you virtually everything you need to know about QuickTime programming. 🖱️

Keith has been a Mac addict since 1984 and still can't fathom why there is anyone who isn't.

Title **QuickTime for Filmmakers + CD**
Author **Richard K Ferncase**
Publisher **Focal Press**
ISBN **0240804961**
RRP **\$77.55**



Title **Interactive QuickTime — Authoring Wired Media + CD**
Author **Matthew Peterson**
Publisher **Morgan Kaufmann**
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RRP **\$US128.70**



Title **QuickTime Toolkit — Vol 1 + CD**
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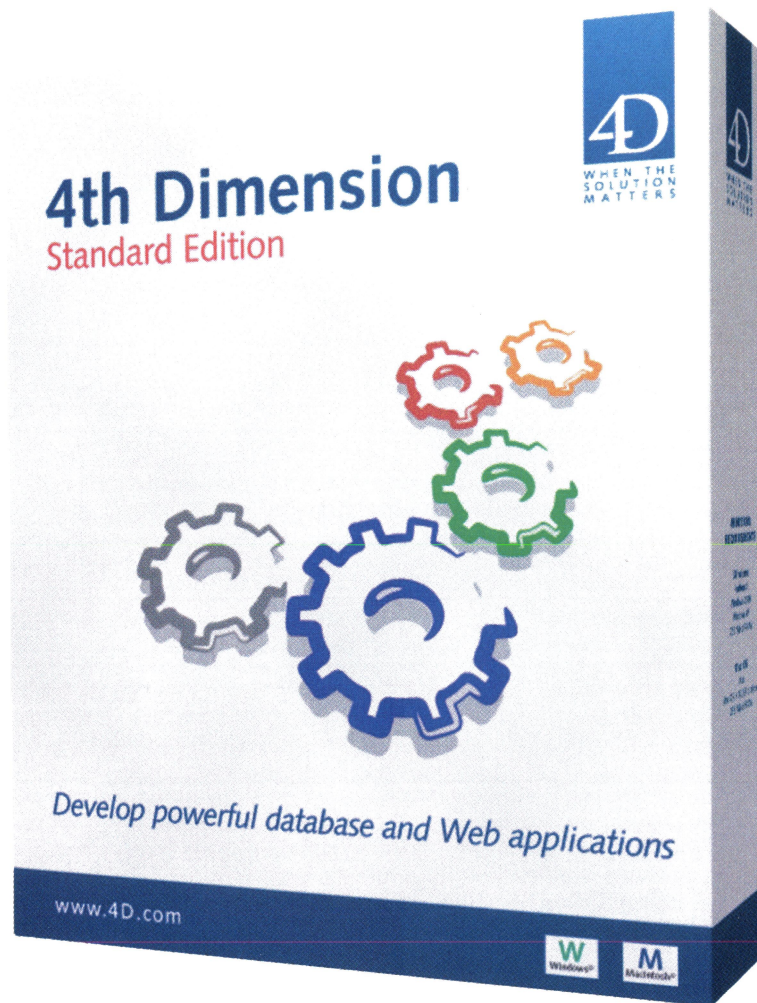
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AMW Labs: CRT monitors

Fat Glass offers value for size

If your budget doesn't stretch to one of the nice LCD monitors reviewed here last month, but you still need plenty of screen real estate, your only choice is one of the monster glass-tube screens known collectively as CRT (cathode-ray tubes). Just like a glass-tube television, only capable of much higher resolution, these screens are large and heavy and take up a lot of desk space.

The first thing you will discover if you go shopping for one of these items is that the number of manufacturers has shrunk over the last few years as the mass-marketing of LCD screens has brought down prices, making it harder for CRTs to compete. Here at AMW Labs we managed to track down six CRT screens, only to discover that three of them are identical apart from the colour of the surround and the name badge on the front. All six screens tested claim to have a 20" viewable areas, but the Samsung is marketed as a 21" monitor, while the Mitsubishi, La Cie, NEC, IBM and Philips are all badged as 22" monitors.

Technology. The three screens from Mitsubishi, La Cie and NEC are all based on Mitsubishi's Diamondtron technology, which in turn is based on Sony's original aperture grille Trinitron design. This method of building a glass tube for colour displays uses parallel stripes of phosphor sensitive to each primary colour, rather than the traditional Invar shadow mask which consists of tiny holes with different colours in triangular clusters. Aperture grille displays claim to be sharper, brighter and higher definition, and these three screens were not only that, but dead flat as well, a quality which used to be the preserve of LCD monitors.

The other feature you will notice with aperture grille displays is that they all require a thin wire running horizontally across the screen to connect all the vertical wires together. This wire is not supposed to be noticeable, and when this technology is used for televisions, you can't see the wire at normal viewing distances. However, you sit a lot closer to your monitor, and on a light background the wire is usually visible. Different screens from the same factory display different levels of visible wire, and you should check before you buy that yours is as inconspicuous as possible.

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Samsung SyncMaster 1100P+



NEC Multisync FP2141SB



Philips Brilliance 202P40/95

	SyncMaster 1100P+	Multisync FP2141SB	Brilliance 202P40/95
■ Type	21" CRT display	22" CRT display	22" CRT display
■ Rating	1/2	1/2	1/2
■ Pros	Nice crisp display, easy controls	Sharp, flat screen, USB hub, price	Component video, price
■ Cons	No USB ports, not a dead-flat screen	No component video inputs	No USB ports
■ Resolution	1800 × 1440	2048 × 1536	2048 × 1536
■ Ports	VGA, component video	Dual VGA, four USB	VGA, component video
■ RRP	\$899	\$1129	\$1399
■ Manufacturer	Samsung	NEC	Philips
■ Distributor	Samsung 02 9763 9700	NEC Australia 131 632	Philips Australia 1300 651 993
■ Reviewer	Ian Yates		
■ Hot links	www.samsung.com.au	www.nec.com.au	www.philips.com.au

Similarly, the Philips and IBM screens use a version of aperture grille technology to achieve the same result, with only the Samsung using an Invar mask. The fact that the Samsung has a curvilinear screen, rather than dead-flat, made it difficult to determine whether the different mask was indeed any less sharp or bright. Being somewhat curved means that the Samsung screen picks up reflections from every direction and this tends to soften the image slightly.

The triplets from Mitsubishi, La Cie and NEC all include a bonus four-port USB hub on the side, which saves you scrabbling around behind your Mac if you don't have the latest model with USB up front. All six monitors provide for a VGA connector between the monitor and the Macintosh, with only the IBM offering a DVI connector on the back, as well as the VGA. However, when connected using a standard DVI cable, no picture appeared, and we were forced to use the cable supplied by IBM with DVI on one end and VGA on the other. In other words, if your Mac has only DVI you're going to need an adapter to use any of these screens.

For those whose Macs are equipped with component video, only the Samsung and Philips made provision for BNC connectors on the rear panel. The other four provided their second input via an additional VGA connector. Maximum resolution was identical at 2048 × 1536 on the five 22" monitors and a slightly lower 1800 × 1440 on the 21" Samsung.

Plug in, switch on. Setting up the monitors to talk to your Mac is essentially a no-brainer. Plug them in and choose the resolution you need up to the maximum. Being CRTs you will find that you need to tweak the controls to get the image centred and filling the available space, but none of the monitors needed much adjustment to get them set up. Although they all provide extensive tweaking of geometry, none required it. However, since CRTs can change over time, you'll probably appreciate being able to adjust them after they've been on your desk for a few months. Only the

Samsung has its controls hidden away in a pop-out drawer, with the rest displaying their buttons on the front panel for all to see.

Why would you buy a large-screen CRT display these days? Mainly to save money. These screens all retail around the thousand dollar mark, while the cheapest 20" LCDs cost about double that amount, and top-notch LCDs can cost up to \$3000. Apart from saving money there is another attraction; CRTs can manage a slightly higher resolution on the same amount of screen real estate. Most 20" LCD panels can only manage 1600 × 1200 resolution. "Only" isn't really fair, since that is quite a lot of resolution and more than adequate for most users. However, if you need that little bit extra, the 22" CRTs can take you to 2048 × 1536 and still remain sharp and in focus.

What you don't get with any of these CRTs is the same sharpness on the edges compared with the centre, due to the physics of the CRT construction. LCDs should be as sharp on the edge as they are in the middle, but the cheaper ones aren't quite as sharp

Pick a port. The Phillips A, like the Samsung, offers component video. The NEC B offers a four-port USB hub (along with the LaCie and Mitsubishi).



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Very sharp and crystal clear	USB hub built-in, best of the triplets	USB hub built-in, included vinyl screen shade
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anywhere as these large aperture grille CRT monitors. It takes two people to safely lift one of the glass monsters and your desk had better be sturdy enough for the up-to-50kg weight. You can easily pick up most LCD screens by yourself, and you can also easily move them around on your desk if required. Once one of these 22" CRTs marks its place on your desk, not much is going to shift it. There's also the issue of how deep these screens are – around 50cm front to back, which means that on the average 70cm desk they will be right in your face if your desk is up against a wall.

Of all these screens the IBM was the personal favourite here at AMW Labs. It required the least amount of tweaking out of the box, and the display appeared to be in better focus across the whole screen area. Next best was the Mitsubishi. Despite being identical in other respects to the La Cie and the NEC, the Mitsubishi was sharpest and needed less tweaking out of the box. However, since these three are all clones of each other, the results may change with another three units. Unfortunately, the Mitsubishi had the

most visible horizontal wire, which was also, as you'd expect, visible on the La Cie and the NEC, albeit slightly less so.

The Philips should probably get third place rather than fifth, since it's competing against the triplets. The display was noticeably softer than the other four 22" models. Trailing the pack was the Samsung, primarily because its screen isn't flat and in this era of dead-flat LCDs, the very minor curvature of the Samsung display looks like a fishbowl in comparison.

Australian Macworld's buying advice. If you need a large glass monitor the best of this bunch is the IBM ThinkVision, and the price is an unbeatable \$899. As long as you can get over the conundrum of sitting in front of an IBM monitor while using your Apple Macintosh, this unit is definitely da bomb. We can't see why you'd pay the higher price for one of the other CRTs when second-hand or superseded LCDs can be had for similar prices. You want big, get the IBM fat glass or spend a little extra on an LCD. 🖥️



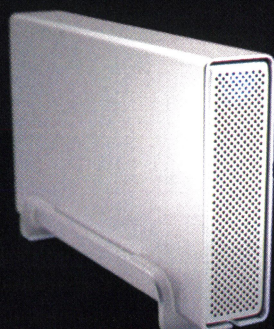
IBM ThinkVision C220P



Mitsubishi DiamondPro 2070SB



La Cie electron22blue IV



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■ Type	Consumer desktop computer
■ Rating	§§§§ 1/2
■ Pros	Excellent value; impressive game and application performance; the high-end eMac includes the same SuperDrive that's in the Power Mac G5 line
■ Cons	Bulky CRT monitor; no FireWire 800 port
■ OS X	Only
■ RRP	\$1299 Combo; \$1599 Super Drive
■ Manufacturer	Apple Computer
■ Distributor	Apple Australia 133 622
■ Reviewer	Jonathan Seff
■ Hot links	www.apple.com.au/emac

1.25GHz eMac

Faster low-end Mac holds its own

THOUGH it was once reserved for the education market, the all-in-one eMac has become a great choice for anyone who needs an inexpensive desktop Mac. Apple's latest eMacs are no exception: they feature more processing power, faster RAM and bus speeds, greater graphics prowess, and more storage and connectivity options – all at lower prices and with fewer limitations than their predecessors.

The eMac is available in two configurations: a \$1599 model with an 80GB hard drive and a CD- and DVD-burning SuperDrive (our test system), and a \$1299 model with a 40GB hard drive and

a DVD-reading and CD-burning Combo drive. Each model sports a 1.25GHz G4 processor (up from 1GHz), 512K of Level 2 cache (twice as much as before), and a faster system bus (up from 133MHz to 167MHz). Both models ship with 256MB of memory and can accept as much as 1GB of RAM.

In our Speedmark tests, our test model came through with a 26 percent jump in overall score. The 1.25GHz eMac also bested its 1GHz predecessor by more than 6 minutes and 30 seconds when compressing video, and it shaved 2 minutes (about 40



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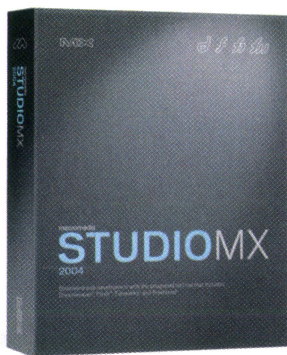
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percent) off the time it takes to encode a CD in iTunes. Even in our Cinema 4D XL rendering test, the new eMac was 28 percent faster. Thanks to the inclusion of the 32MB ATI Radeon 9200 graphics chip with 4x AGP support, the 1.25GHz model pushed out nearly 70 percent more frames per second in our Unreal Tournament test, going from a poor 9.7 fps to a more respectable 16.4 fps. On the new eMac, the game looked great and felt extremely fast.

Each model has three USB 2.0 ports (and two USB 1.1 ports on the keyboard), two FireWire 400 ports, a 100-Mbps Ethernet port, a 56-Kbps modem, and a built-in microphone. Like the previous models, these eMacs are wired for AirPort Extreme but don't include AirPort cards. The \$1599 eMac comes with an 8x SuperDrive, the same drive that's in the Power Mac G5.

The design of the eMac, the only product in Apple's lineup that still uses a CRT display, remains unchanged – a potential drawback for fashion-conscious or space-challenged users. Both models feature a 17" flat CRT monitor and have a mini-VGA port for mirroring your desktop on an additional monitor or a TV.

This eMac beat the now-defunct 17" G4 iMac in many of our tests but lost in MPEG-2 encoding by about 6 percent. The iMac's 64MB of graphics RAM gave it a healthy edge in frame-rate tests.

Australian Macworld's buying advice. The 1.25GHz eMac is an impressive computer that holds its own against the pricier iMac, and the lowered price makes the top-of-the-line eMac even more appealing. 

				
Shorter is better Longer is better Best results in bold	Speedmark 3.3 overall score	iTunes 4.5 mp3 encode	Unreal Tournament frame rate	Compressor mpeg-2 encode
eMac/1.25GHz	129	3:01	16.4	13:57
eMac/1GHz	102	5:01	9.7	20:35
iMac/1.25GHz	121	3:20	21.6	13:10

Speedmark 3.3 scores are relative to those of a 1GHz eMac G4 running Mac OS X 10.3.1, which is assigned a score of 100. iTunes and Compressor scores are in minutes:seconds. We tested each system with Mac OS X 10.3.4 and 512MB of RAM installed. We tested MP3 encoding with an audio-CD track that was 45 minutes long, converting it from the hard drive using iTunes' High Quality setting. We used Unreal Tournament's Antalus Botmatch average frames per second score; we tested at a resolution of 1024 x 768 pixels. We tested MPEG-2 encoding with a DV file that was 6 minutes and 46 seconds long; we used Compressor's Fast Encode preset.

● Macworld lab testing by James Galbraith and Jeffy K. Milstead



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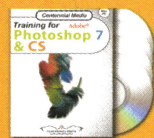
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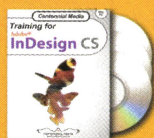
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■ Type	Rack-mount server
■ Rating	★★★★½
■ Pros	OS license included in purchase; easy administration and monitoring; works well in mixed environments
■ Cons	Hardware-based RAID not built-in, as is the case with similar Intel-based servers
■ OS X	Only
■ RRP	\$4799 single processor; \$6499 dual processor; \$479 cluster node
■ Manufacturer	Apple Computer
■ Distributor	Apple Australia 133 622
■ Reviewer	PJ Connolly
■ Hot links	www.apple.com.au/xserve

Xserve G5

Nearly miraculous design squeezes tonnes of functionality into 1U space

ALITTLE more than a year ago, I sat in San Francisco's Moscone West convention hall as Steve Jobs pulled the wraps off the Power Mac G5 desktop, and I tried to figure out how Apple's engineers would shoehorn two small furnaces into the Xserve's 1U chassis. Walking out of the building, a colleague and I shook our heads and said that it couldn't be done, that they were going to have to use a 2U box. Now the Xserve G5 has proved us wrong, and we couldn't be happier.

Dual design goals. Apple's design team pulled off the impossible by throwing ten heat sensors and an intelligent fan subsystem into the Xserve case, and by using newly available 90-nanometer PowerPC G5 CPUs from IBM. Apple has also radically changed the server's front panel, reducing the number of drive bays from four to three.

Compared with its predecessors, the Xserve G5 has a striking appearance; the twin air scoops that keep the two 2GHz G5 processors from melting down make sure of that. Inside, the polished and embossed CPU heat sinks are decorative and functional.

Speed and RAID.

Some other tweaks to the Xserve G5 compensate for the shortcomings of the earlier models; for example, two Gigabit Ethernet interfaces are built into the server, and indepen-

dent frontside buses running at 1GHz rapidly sling data in and out of the Xserve's processors. Although a drive bay had to be sacrificed to make room for the cooling system's intakes, the Xserve's storage capacity is now greater than that of the G4 models, thanks to new 250GB Serial ATA drives. The new drive modules aren't interchangeable with those found in the G4 Xserves and the first-generation Xserve RAID, but they will work in the new RAID box. The new Xserve can also hold 8GB of error-correcting memory, and it can slosh more than 6GB of data through RAM in one second.

The Xserve's remaining major flaw will soon be rectified: as we went to press, Apple shipped an add-on card that provides hardware RAID support for the Xserve family, which is available through the Apple Store. Although you can use Mac OS X's Disk Utility to set up a software-based RAID, a hardware RAID is faster. More importantly, the new card makes the Xserve more competitive with Intel-based servers, where that feature has been standard – often built-in – for years.


The icing on top. The Xserve remains the most easily managed server on the market. Much of that is a feature of the OS; nevertheless, the tight, secure integration of the Xserve management application (updated to version 10.3.4 in June), the hardware, and the OS makes this server very versatile. The new suite is mostly a series of bug fixes and interface tweaks, but, oddly enough, it also includes an update to QuickTime Broadcaster.

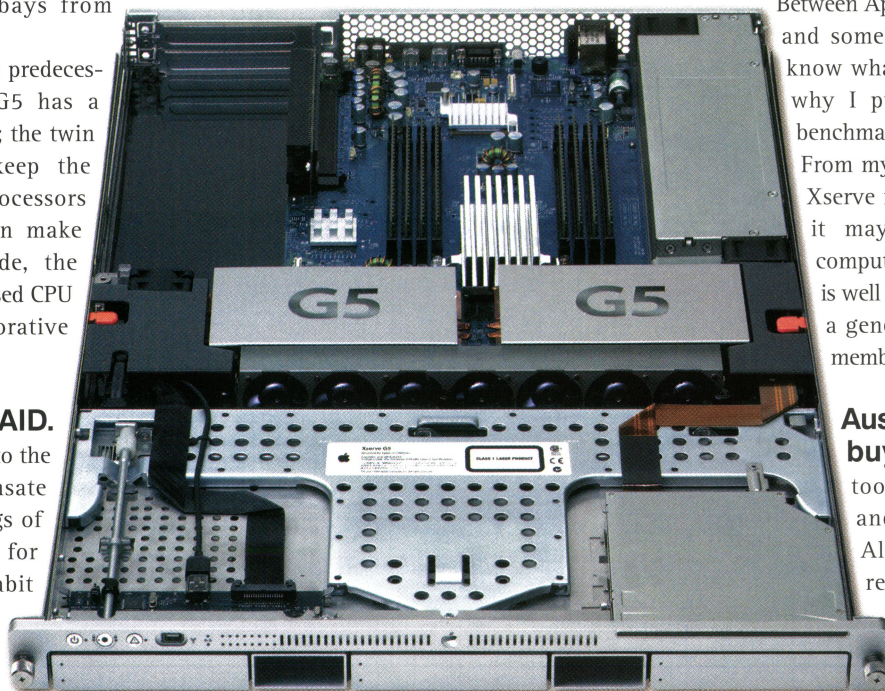
An unlimited-client license for Mac OS X Server remains part of the Xserve package unless you buy the Cluster Node configuration – which features a ten-client license, no CD drive, and only one drive bay.

X speed. Although Apple's Xserve technology is unquestionably cutting-edge – especially the dedicated high-speed frontside processor buses and the point-to-point system controller – some reports say that the server's performance leaves much to be desired.

Between Apple's performance claims and some of our results, I don't know what to believe – which is why I put very little stock in benchmarking this type of server. From my testing perspective, the Xserve feels fast enough. While it may not shine in every computing scenario, the Xserve is well suited to the role of either a general purpose server or a member of a computing cluster.

Australian Macworld's buying advice.

Apple took a pretty good server and made it even better. Although some problems remain, the Xserve G5 kicks butt effortlessly and looks good doing it. 



■ Type	Mass storage device
■ Rating	★★★★½
■ Pros	Certified for Linux, Mac, NetWare, and Windows; now supports 3.5TB
■ Cons	On-board RAID controllers still not redundant
■ OS X	Only
■ RRP	\$17,999; smaller configurations available
■ Manufacturer	Apple Computer
■ Distributor	Apple Australia 133 622
■ Reviewer	PJ Connolly
■ Hot links	www.apple.com.au/xserve

3.5TB (SFP) Xserve RAID

Bigger and more compatible

The original Xserve RAID was an impressive entry to the mass-storage market. The enhancements in the second go-around make the Xserve RAID an excellent choice.

The most important new feature is that the capacity of the 3U RAID chassis is now 3.5TB, thanks to Apple's decision to switch from ATA-based drives to larger-capacity Serial ATA drives. There are some subtler changes in the new hardware, as well as a few in the updated RAID Admin management utility.

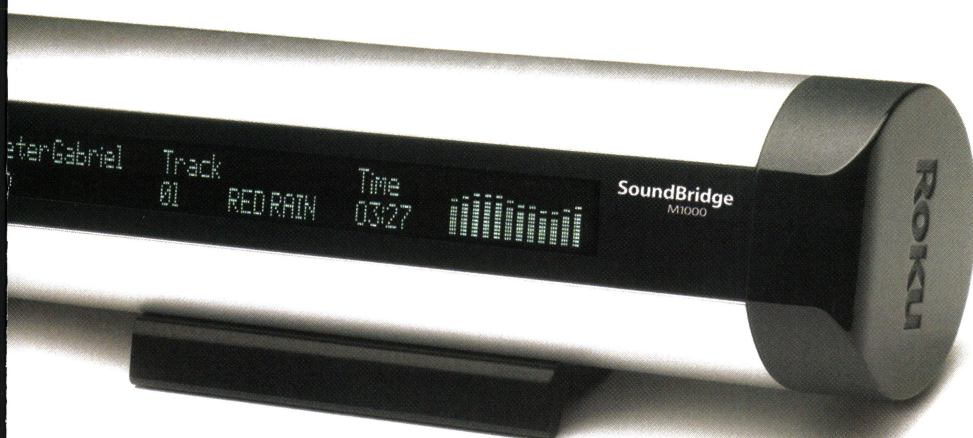
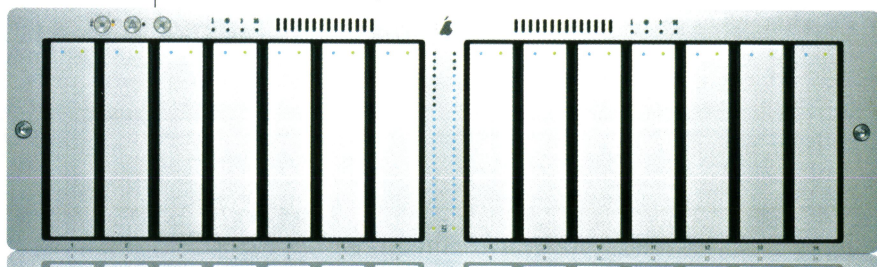
Although the Xserve RAID's twin Fibre Channel controllers still aren't redundant — each controller serves half of the drive bays — Apple's decision to switch the controller module's interface from an HSSDC2 (High-Speed Serial Data Connector 2) receptacle to an SFP (Small Form-factor Pluggable) jack should simplify the setup

process. The downside is incompatible, but visually similar, cables for the two Xserve RAID models.

The Java-based RAID Admin utility is still not going to provide anyone's idea of instant response, but the version I did most of my testing with (1.3) does seem to be somewhat peppier than the version that shipped with the original Xserve RAID. Version 1.3.1 includes a number of bug fixes and became available as testing wrapped up; all I had time to do was install it and verify that it didn't break my test bed.

The Xserve RAID is now a true multi-platform player; in addition to Mac OS X, it's certified for Microsoft Windows Server, Novell NetWare, and Red Hat Linux. On top of that, leading storage hardware and software vendors including Brocade, Emulex, and Veritas have certified the Xserve RAID with their products. So customers can now use the Xserve RAID in their storage area networks — thus spending less money than they would for similarly configured hardware from HP and IBM.

Australian Macworld's buying advice. The Xserve RAID is nearly perfect; for its price, there's no better RAID available. When Apple releases its upcoming Xsan software, it's going to be tough to find a better all-around package for building SANs (storage area networks) on a budget.



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■ Type	CAD software
■ Rating	4 1/2
■ Pros	Improved Trim and Split tools; fast, easy Resource Browser; better text interface; excellent QuickTime VR presentation; Viewports' flexible views; good DWG translation
■ Cons	Lacks batch-printing capability; no URL hyperlinks
■ OS X	Only
■ RRP	\$2087: extra licenses \$1457.50 each
■ Publisher	Nemetschek
■ Distributor	OzCAD 02 8338 8622
■ Reviewer	Greg Miller
■ Hot links	www.ozcad.com.au

VectorWorks 11

A panoply of productivity and drafting improvements

VECTORWORKS, a 2D and 3D CAD staple for architecture, design, and engineering pros, is proof that you don't have to run Autodesk's AutoCAD on a PC to be taken seriously as a designer. VectorWorks 11 sports a wealth of productivity improvements and key new capabilities that align it more closely with AutoCAD, the industry leader.

Productivity and drafting.

Nemetschek, VectorWorks' developer, has added a wealth of productivity and drafting enhancements. Users will appreciate the attention to detail shown in this upgrade, as it will make day-to-day drafting tasks significantly easier.

First, the much-improved Trim and Split tools give you more control over trimming and/or splitting complex shapes and polylines with other objects, such as lines. I also like the Resource Browser's new feature that allows you to apply symbols to a drawing quickly with a simple drag and drop. An improved text interface lets you change the font, point size, style, alignment, and spacing of any text block right in the Object Info palette, instead of requiring multiple selections from the Text menu, as previous versions did.

Presentation, rendering, and 3D. VectorWorks 11 features valuable additions that give you more 3D presentation options. For example, a new Artistic Rendering mode allows you to apply artistic effects to your 3-D renderings, giving them a warmer, hand-drawn feeling similar to effects produced with Adobe Photoshop plug-ins.

VectorWorks 11 also comes with hundreds of new textures, including wood, stone, metals, fabrics, and an extensive collection of linoleum floor and wall coverings. You can simply drag and drop textures onto your 3D models and then position, resize, and rotate them in real time without having to search for a specific dialog box.

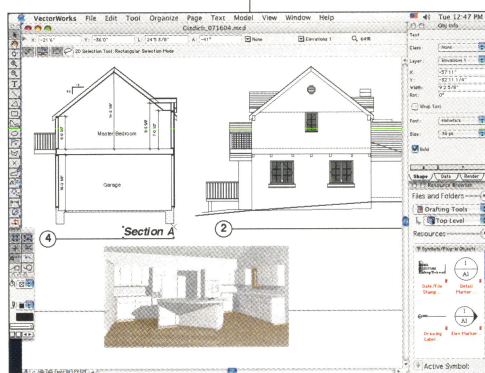
The best new presentation addition to VectorWorks, however, is QuickTime VR. VectorWorks 11 includes an easy-to-use, built-in QuickTime VR generation tool for both panoramas and objects. QuickTime VR panoramas allow you to view your model from a single point and rotate 360 degrees. QuickTime VR objects allow you to grab an object on the screen and spin it around to get multiple viewing angles. You can distribute the VR files via e-mail or web sites; they're viewable with QuickTime on both Mac and Windows machines. Until now, only Graphisoft's ArchiCAD, a high-end CAD program, had this feature.

Viewports. VectorWorks' most significant improvement is the new Viewports, a page-layout feature that lets you set up sheets that show multiple views of the same model or drawing. Each view has an independent scale, orientation, rendering, layer, and class visibility setting. These views are automatically updated when you change the master drawing.

Viewports can also show you different layer sets of a master drawing on the same sheet, without requiring that you physically separate layers that should remain aligned. For example, you may have aligned a first-floor layer and a second-floor layer, but you want to see both floors on the same sheet next to each other. Viewports lets you do this without moving them out of alignment. Viewports can contain separate annotations that give you detailed

or enlarged plan views on the same sheet from the same drawing.


The Viewports feature is even more valuable because Viewports views are now maintained during import and export, using AutoCAD's native DWG format. VectorWorks 11 supports AutoCAD 2004 formats and the sharing of 3D data — including 3D solids information. These enhancements let VectorWorks designers integrate seamlessly into project teams that use different CAD programs in Windows.



Viewing variety. VectorWorks 11 can show multiple drawings in a single view.

Wish list. While you can easily create a PDF file of any VectorWorks drawing, I'd like to see a more integrated approach to PDF that allowed you to batch-print multiple sheets and/or Viewports. This ability already exists in AutoCAD on the Windows platform.

I would also like to see VectorWorks integrate URL hyperlinks into drawings for both objects and text blocks. That would let users link to project web sites, or specific web-based product information, from within a drawing. It would also allow a VectorWorks drawing to serve as the central interface of a presentation, or of a working session containing multiple media formats such as images, virtual-reality views, and QuickTime movies.

Australian Macworld's buying advice. If you're thinking about buying a CAD program, VectorWorks 11 should be at the top of your list. If you already own an older version of VectorWorks, the improved DWG translation and the new Viewports make the upgrade a wise choice. The other enhancements just add to VectorWorks' considerable value. 

■ Type	Asset-management software
■ Rating	★★★★
■ Pros	Rich data about images; permits fine-tuned searches; custom views of image collections; allows easy distribution of image catalogues via CD
■ Cons	NetPublish's limited web distribution support; NetPublish requires extra licenses for production use; Smart Gallery creation is cumbersome
■ OS X	Only
■ RRP	\$329; upgrades and site licenses available
■ Publisher	Extensis
■ Distributor	PICA 03 9388 9588
■ Reviewer	Galen Gruman
■ Hot links	www.extensis.com

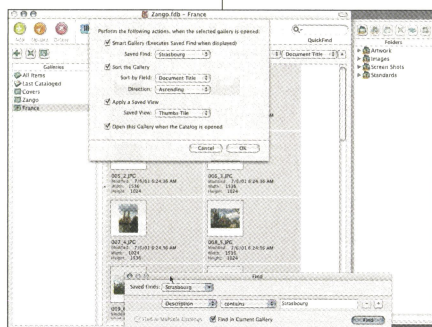
Portfolio 7

New version brings ease and flexibility

WHETHER you're a photographer, an illustrator, or another type of creative pro, managing a multitude of images, comps, and other client files can be a real challenge. For years, Extensis's Portfolio has offered a powerful, flexible tool for this task. And the latest release, version 7, includes several welcome improvements.

One of the handiest additions is the ability to create CDs containing image catalogues – either of thumbnails or of the images at their actual sizes – directly from the program. Portfolio gathers the necessary files, including the catalogue and viewers, and burns them to a CD in one step. You can include Portfolio browsers for both OS X and Windows – a nice touch.

Smart searching. Extensis has enhanced Portfolio's search capabilities with a feature called Smart Galleries. A Smart Gallery combines a search and a custom view, letting you display images that meet specific criteria (such as being for a particular client, updated in the past day, and derived from a digital camera) in the visual arrangement of your choice. My only quibble is that it takes too many steps to create a Smart Gallery: you must first save your search criteria, then create a gallery, and then control-click on the gallery to set it up as a Smart Gallery (see the screenshot "Intelligent searching"). Once set, Smart Galleries are



Intelligent searching. Portfolio's Smart Galleries feature uses your saved, customised search criteria to help you find groups of images.

automatic – just click on the gallery name, and Portfolio updates the search to show the latest matches.


Advanced archiving. Portfolio 7 features a host of significant enhancements that support professional-level archival techniques. Watch folders, for example, are places where you can automatically catalogue new assets by syncing folders on your hard drive or networks with Portfolio catalogues. The program can now convert images to TIFF or JPEG format and support additional types of digital-image information tags such as IPTC and XMP. The program also can now generate contact sheets and log who last modified an image. All of these improvements work well and are straightforward and convenient to use.

On the net. Perhaps Portfolio's most promising – but also disappointing – new feature is NetPublish, a utility that lets you display galleries on the web for easy client review. The software includes several well-designed templates and an easy-to-use

wizard to help you create your pages. You can also set NetPublish to work as an intranet. NetPublish is designed as a dynamic site utility that updates automatically as you add content to a catalogue.

Unfortunately, the feature is optimal only if you host your own web site using either Apache 1.3 on OS X or Internet Information Services on Windows. Even worse, NetPublish doesn't currently support users who have their sites hosted by third-party providers, usually on Unix systems. There is a workaround, but it poses a security risk. (The good news is that Portfolio does let you export static HTML pages for posting to any web server.)

Further, NetPublish in Portfolio 7 allows only one user (actually, one IP address) to connect each hour, so even if you do meet the hosting requirements, you can't use NetPublish in a production environment unless you buy additional connection licenses.

Australian Macworld's buying advice. Portfolio 7 is a powerful cataloguing and inventory tool, and a great way to organise your digital assets. It makes particular sense for small and midsize organisations that use a dedicated Mac for asset management. I prefer it to Canto's less flexible Cumulus 6 Personal Edition. If your organisation is large, consider Canto's selection of enterprise image-management tools instead. 

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■ Type	Database application
■ Rating	★★★★
■ Pros	Powerful tools for managing files, windows, and relationships; practically unlimited file size; better control over user-access privileges; easy to share databases on the web
■ Cons	Relationships Graph can get confusing; can't trigger script when user exits field
■ OS X	Only
■ RRP	\$499; \$249 Upgrade from v6
■ Publisher	FileMaker Inc
■ Distributor	FileMaker 1800 028 316
■ Reviewer	William Porter
■ Hot links	www.filemaker.com

FileMaker Pro 7

Includes revolutionary changes but retains ease of use

VERSION 7 of FileMaker's popular flagship product, FileMaker Pro, has something for everyone, including end users who have never defined a field or tweaked a layout, managers who make purchasing decisions, and IT types who support networks and care about security and reliability. But developers – whether they're in-house, independent, or do-it-yourself – will be most excited about this release.

Fewer worries for IT professionals. For IT pros, FileMaker Pro 7 offers major improvements in security and multi-user access. Network administrators will find that configuring access privileges and dealing with passwords is both easier and more flexible than it used to be. For example, it's now possible to give a single account both edit-only access to existing layouts and create-and-edit privileges with respect to new layouts, so a user can define custom reports.

Discussion of FileMaker Server 7 (for LAN sharing to more than five users) and a new product, FileMaker Server 7 Advanced (for LAN and web), is outside the scope of this review, but the specifications are impressive. The number of concurrent users on a LAN has doubled to 250. Due to major improvements in the Instant Web Publishing feature, web access to a database is remarkably similar to LAN access in overall functionality. Web users see the same layouts, click on the same buttons, and (in most cases) benefit from scripts that work the same way.

Something for ordinary users, too. FileMaker Pro 7 also has its share of improvements that ordinary users will appreciate, even if many require that a developer set them up. It's now possible to configure layouts so that changes made to a record require

confirmation before they're saved; if you discover you've edited the wrong record, you can click on the Cancel button and no harm will be done. Text-formatting functions make it easier than ever to do things such as flag invoices that are 60 days past due and show negative calculation results in red. A developer can also assign auto-enter calculation formulas to data-field definitions, to format phone numbers and Social Security numbers automatically.

In addition, many old technical limits have been obliterated. Container fields are no longer limited to multimedia files such as photos or QuickTime movies; in fact, each container field can now store virtually any kind of document, even other FileMaker Pro databases as large as 4GB. According to FileMaker, text fields can now hold as much as 2GB of text (up from 64K), and files can grow to 8 terabytes (up from 2GB).

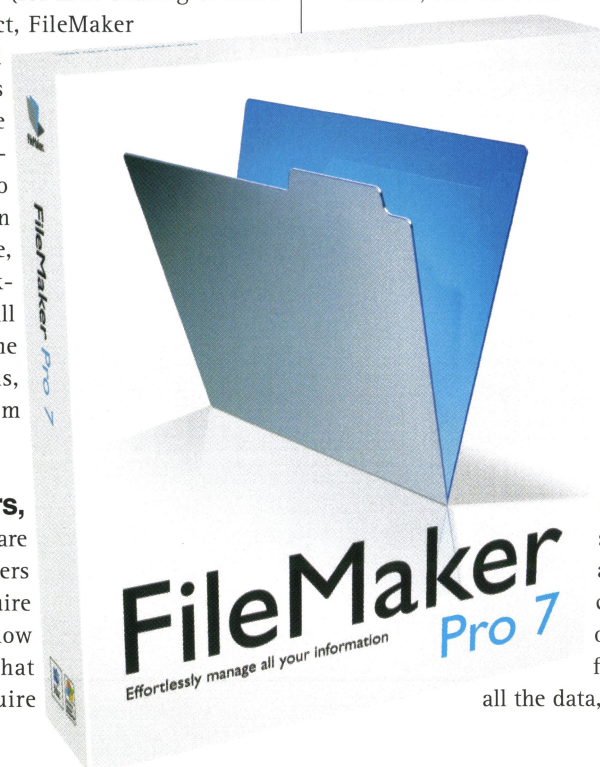
Liberating developers. The improvements I've already mentioned would be enough for an ordinary upgrade, but this isn't an ordinary upgrade. Beneath the surface, in fact, it's a whole new app.

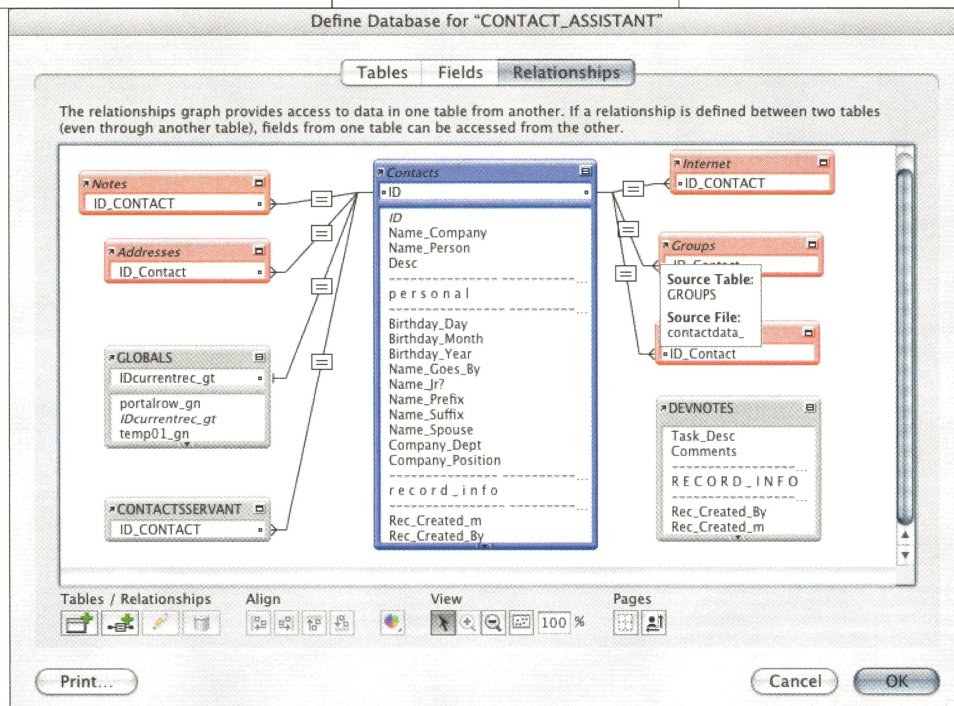
The biggest news in FileMaker Pro 7 is that developers are no longer constrained by the old one-file-equals-one-window-equals-one-data-table rule. In earlier versions of FileMaker Pro, anything more complex than a grocery list required multiple files – one file for each distinct class of data (accounts, invoices, line items, products, suppliers, and so on). In FileMaker Pro 6, tasks such as changing passwords and defining relationships involved opening file after file. Sorting lists of related records in portals in more than one way often required creating multiple copies of the same relationship. Getting data from indirectly related files was, well, a pain in the neck. Amazingly, it all worked pretty well. Looking back on it now, I have to say that the old way was a bit nutty.

It's all changed dramatically for the better with FileMaker Pro 7. One file, one window? Not anymore. Even in a single-file database, you can open multiple windows, showing different sets of records from the same table, or records from different tables, or simply using different layouts. Users working in simple databases just use the New Window command. Developers can open and name new windows procedurally, define their dimensions, and control their placement. This is a huge step forward.

As for the one-file-one-table rule, it's gone. Maximum number of tables in a file? According to FileMaker, it's now one million, up from only one table per file in FileMaker Pro 6. A single database file can now contain absolutely every element of a complex relational database: dozens of tables, hundreds or thousands of fields, layouts, scripts, value lists, and

all the data, to boot.





Striking up relationships. Each object on the graph represents an instance of a single data table. To define a simple relationship, draw a line from one match field to another.

Of course, you don't have to put everything in one file. Instead, in FileMaker Pro 7, you can do whatever you think works best for your project: all the tables in one file, or each table in its own file (still possible), or data tables in one file and scripts and layouts in another file that might have no tables at all, or different front-end files for different departments in a company that all access the same back-end data, or any number of other permutations.

Relationships go GUI. Rich new possibilities require a flexible new interface for developers. You now define relationships between data tables using something called the Relationships Graph. To create a simple relationship between two tables, draw a line between the match fields (see the screenshot "Striking Up relationships"). More-complex relationships can be defined using a special dialog box; for example, an account record can quickly be related to all invoice records whose paid-date field is empty and whose invoice-date field is more than 30 days in the past.

Like many innovations, the Relationships Graph solves some problems and creates others. If you need to relate tables X and Y in more than one way (as sometimes happens), you'll discover that the graph will not tolerate circularity. To avoid this, you have to place a second instance of one of the tables on the graph. Even a relatively small


number of tables whose basic relationships could be represented in a straightforward ER (entity-relationship) diagram can turn into a rather scary-looking Relationships Graph in FileMaker Pro 7.

Developers I've talked to are still debating the best ways to deal with the new relational model, but nobody seems to want to go back to the old one. Managing more than two or three tables takes careful planning, but that's not a drawback. Careful planning has always been the key to good database design. And the tools in version 7 are an order of magnitude more powerful than those available in earlier versions.

What's not to like? FileMaker Pro still can't trigger a script automatically when the user exits a field, and I wish I had more control over

the program's menus. However, it should be noted that both of these limitations can be remedied by third-party plug-ins.

Converting the old. To use your old databases with FileMaker Pro 7, you'll need to convert the old files to the new .fp7 file format. You should be able to convert simple databases without a hitch, but converting even moderately complex databases may be somewhat tricky. The good news is that plenty of first-rate technical help is available for free on FileMaker's web site. Study up before you try to convert. It's possible (and legal) to run FileMaker Pro 6 and 7 on the same machine at the same time, so you can jump into FileMaker Pro 7 and bring your old files along when you're ready.

Australian Macworld's buying advice. If you're happy with the old FileMaker database you're running now, upgrading to FileMaker Pro 7 may involve some trouble and expense. Even if you're already using OS X, converting old databases will take some planning. Nonetheless, version 7 offers compelling advantages. It's the most secure, most reliable, most powerful, and most flexible FileMaker Pro ever, and it's still every bit as user-friendly as its predecessors. 

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■ Type	Outlining software
■ Rating	★★★★
■ Pros	Excellent organisational features; highly customisable settings; great combination of document-specific and project-wide tasks; easy to switch between various documents and versions
■ Cons	Few text formatting options; no import or export with Microsoft Word
■ OS X	Only
■ RRP	\$US30
■ Publisher	Bartas Technologies
■ Distributor	Available online
■ Reviewer	Mathew Honan
■ Hot links	www.bartastechnologies.colm

CopyWrite 2.1

A simple system for organising and editing manuscripts

WRITING a novel is hard enough without having to keep track of all the chapters, versions, outlines, and notes floating around in your Documents folder. CopyWrite 2.1.1, from Bartas Technologies, makes the creative process a little less messy and a lot more productive.

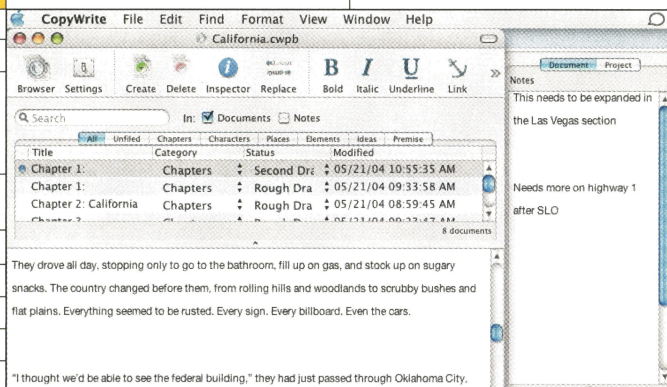
CopyWrite is neither a word processor nor a desktop publishing program. If you handle a lot of text, it's an excellent alternative to memory-intensive, feature-laden applications such as Microsoft Word – especially when you're handling multiple documents. For example, a 9000-word manuscript in CopyWrite uses considerably less memory than a 900-word document in Word.

CopyWrite has more in common with other novel-writing programs, such as Stone Table Software's Z-Write and The Blue Technologies Group's Ulysses: it lets you organise text in just about any way you want. You aren't locked into a preset structure, which typically works poorly for creative writers.

Easy to use. CopyWrite's interface is straightforward, and getting started is easy.

I used CopyWrite for two very different projects. In the first, it functioned as a complete writing and editing tool for a novel in its early stages; in the second, as a reporting and document-management tool for a conference I was covering. In both cases, it organised text exceptionally well while allowing me to focus on content, rather than style – unlike many word processors, in which sophisticated formatting features interfere with writing.

I found CopyWrite's default settings ideal for writing a novel. I started with a folder of story notes and a plot outline created in TextEdit, three chapters in Microsoft Word format, and several other Word documents containing stray passages and character-development notes. CopyWrite made organising these disparate elements remarkably easy, and it eliminated the need to switch between applications. However, its import function is limited to previous versions of CopyWrite, ASCII text, and Rich Text Format files. Unfortunately, the program can't import directly from a Microsoft Word or any other word-processing document, so I had to copy and paste from my Word documents into CopyWrite.



Keeping tabs. CopyWrite's Project Browser (top pane) keeps track of your chapters, character notes, and settings, collapsing out of view when you want to focus exclusively on your text.

Page-formatting tools. CopyWrite does include some basic formatting tools. The editing screen lets you set fonts as boldface, underlined, italic, or hyperlinked. The program can check spelling; provide word, page, and character counts; and perform search-and-replace operations. A global replace button lets you make changes throughout all project documents, so if you decide, for example, that "Eugene" is really more of a "Trevor," changing the character's name throughout the manuscript is no problem. CopyWrite's main organisational tools are its Project Browser window, which appears above the document, and its Notes drawer, which shows up to the right of the document. Both can be collapsed and hidden. The Notes drawer now has a special field for including external links.

Organising tools. The Notes drawer is helpful because it lets you take both project-wide and document-specific notes. Want to write a note that applies to only one chapter? Just associate it with that document. Need to leave a note up for the entire book? File it under Project, and it will appear in any document you work on.

The Project Browser is both a document organiser and a browser. In default mode, it lets you categorise documents as chapters, characters, places, elements, ideas, or premises, or leave them unfiled. Further, you can categorise each document according to its status in the editing process, from a new document through various drafts. The Browser makes it easy to quickly switch back and forth between documents or categories.

A handy built-in search field, similar to the one in Apple's Mail program, lets you instantly find all references to particular terms. Users aren't locked into the default settings. Adding, removing, and renaming both category and status settings is a snap. This feature is particularly useful if you use CopyWrite for tasks other than creative writing, as I did when covering a conference in Silicon Valley.

In the Browser's Settings view, I replaced the defaults with two new categories: one for working notes, and another for final documents. This made it extremely easy to turn rough notes into polished stories. Each document – no matter how you file it – can also have multiple versions. This was particularly useful when I was editing stories to fit a word count, and it let me recover deleted passages from prior versions easily.

Australian Macworld's buying advice. CopyWrite 2.1.1 is a top-notch text editor and organiser, and it's reasonably priced. I recommend it for use with multiple related documents where content is more important than presentation. 📖

■ Type	iPod accessory
■ Rating	★★★
■ Pros	Expands the iPod's functionality; lets you store photos easily
■ Cons	Limited camera support; not officially compatible with the iPod mini
■ RRP	\$190
■ Manufacturer	Belkin
■ Distributor	Belkin Australia/New Zealand 1800 666 040
■ Reviewer	Jackie Dove
■ Hot links	www.belkin.com/ipod/cameralink

Digital Camera Link for iPod

Transfers your photos on the go

If you've ever been on a photo shoot and despaired at the prospect of keeping multiple CompactFlash cards in order, conserving space on a card, or lugging your laptop around for storing images, Belkin's Digital Camera Link for iPod has your name on it. The Digital Camera Link is a specialised device that does one thing: it transfers photos from a digital camera to an iPod for storage until you can transfer them to your Mac.

The Digital Camera Link, powered by two AA batteries, is compact, lightweight, and easy to operate. Just connect your camera to the unit's USB port, connect the unit to your iPod, press a button on the unit, and then see the progression of your image transfer on its LED readout. In my tests, a roll of 88 images, totalling 101MB, transferred in 2 minutes and 46 seconds – more than twice as fast as with its predecessor, Belkin's Media Reader for iPod, which took 5 minutes and 19 seconds to transfer images from the same CompactFlash card. You can find the image roll number in your iPod's Extras: Photo Import menu.

Unfortunately, the Digital Camera Link's hardware requirements are bound to leave out a lot of potential users. To use it, you need both a camera that's compatible with it and an iPod with a dock connector. Belkin doesn't support using the Digital Camera Link

with the iPod mini (though there have been reports of successful usage) or with any older-generation iPod. It's compatible with only certain camera models in the Canon, Sony, Olympus, Hewlett-Packard, and Nikon lines. On its web site, Belkin helpfully lists all the cameras the Digital Camera Link works with (see "Hot links"), but just as many cameras have not been tested and are not guaranteed to work with the device. I tried the Digital Camera Link on my Canon PowerShot G2, but it struck out. It did work, however, with an Olympus C4000 Zoom and a Nikon Coolpix 4300.

The Digital Camera Link works with mass-storage DCF- and PTP-compatible cameras. Mass-storage DCF and PTP are methods by which image information is stored on and retrieved from a camera.

Australian Macworld's buying advice. The Digital Camera Link for iPod is handy for clearing out your camera's CompactFlash cards and tucking your images safely into your iPod until you can get them into your Mac. If you have an iPod with a dock connector and a compatible camera, then shoot away. 📷



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with charger and splitter



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various colours to suit the
latest iPod and iPod Mini



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■ Type	Digital music player
■ Rating	★★★★½
■ Pros	Clickable scroll wheel; long battery life; improved audiobook support.
■ Cons	On-The-Go playlists aren't saved in manual mode.
■ OS X	Only
■ RRP	\$499 20GB; \$649 40GB
■ Manufacturer	Apple Computer
■ Distributor	Apple Australia 133 622
■ Reviewer	Jason Snell
■ Hot links	www.apple.com.au/ipod

Fourth-generation iPods

Adopts click wheel, extends battery life

WITH controls borrowed from the iPod mini, a simplified interface, and a reduced price, the latest generation of iPods is the appropriate next step in Apple's stunningly popular line of digital-audio players.

On the outside. As always, the iPod is a white-fronted, stainless steel-backed device that's roughly the size of a deck of cards. The new, iPod mini-like grey Click Wheel, in place of the previous version's touch-sensitive buttons, is the biggest change in the new iPods. The row of buttons located above the wheel on the previous model seemed like a good idea, but hitting them accidentally was too easy. To skip, play, and pause songs, and to navigate the new iPod's menus, you now physically depress the edge of the iPod's wheel at one of the four compass points; each is labelled with its function.

This iPod's Click Wheel interface works just as well as the iPod mini's. iPod users who skipped over the button-equipped models

will find that using the Click Wheel is almost identical to using the ring of buttons around the scroll wheel on early iPod models.


If you've been frustrated by the battery life of previous iPods, you'll be pleased by the longer battery life introduced in this iteration. Apple claims that these iPods will stay charged for 12 hours, versus 8 hours for the previous generation, thanks in part to better power-saving features. We fully charged the new iPod and played it back on a continuous-play shuffle of several-thousand rock songs; in our first test, we managed to eke out about 11 hours of battery life, and we hit the 12-hour mark in our second test.

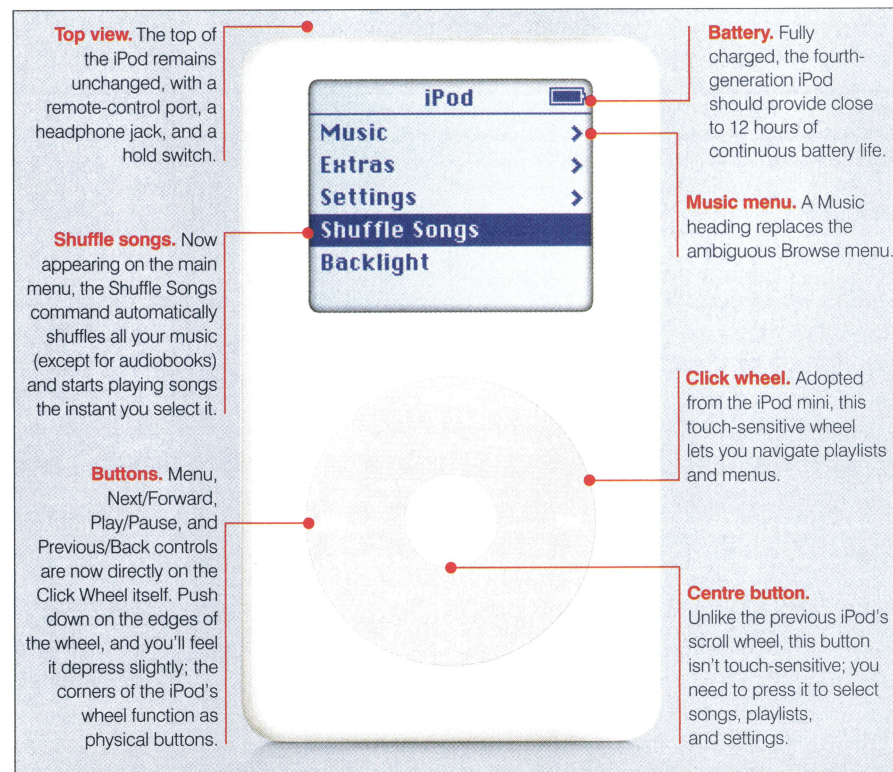
Interface changes. A new iPod brings a new version of the iPod software, and version 3.0 offers several changes. Most noticeable is the rearrangement of the iPod's menus: Browse has become Music; a new Shuffle Songs command has appeared; and Playlists has been turned off by default. The Shuffle Songs command will please compulsive shufflers, but renaming Browse as Music doesn't seem to make much sense, especially since there's now an Audiobooks entry in the Music menu.

Despite the misnamed Music menu, fans of spoken-word audio content will find a lot to like about these new iPods. The Music: Audiobooks command provides you with a list of all your audiobooks, saving you two menu clicks. Under Settings: Audiobooks, you can choose to shift the speed at which a book is played, without shifting its pitch. The effect is seamless, and if you've ever been stuck with a particularly slow or fast audiobook reader, you'll know what a godsend it is.

The previous generation of iPods introduced the ability for iPod users to make On-The-Go playlists while they were out and about with their iPods. The new iPods improve on that feature, by letting you save and create many playlists. Unfortunately, if you're using the iPod's manual mode rather than syncing your iPod automatically with your Mac, these playlists are wiped out when you plug the iPod back into your Mac.

It's also unfortunate that the iPod still doesn't support iTunes' method of filtering out artists who appear only in compilations from the artist list. If you have a lot of compilations on your iPod, those artists can really bog down browsing.

Australian Macworld's buying advice. What you demand from your music player will determine whether this iPod update will satisfy you. If your digital music collection remains relatively small, you're probably better off with an iPod mini. If it takes 30 days to play your music collection from end to end, if you'd like to use the iPod's extra space for file storage, if you need extra battery life, or if you're a big fan of audiobooks, you'll love the new iPods. 



■ Type	Video plug-in
■ Rating	★★★★
■ Pros	Shortcut to your favourite film looks; good set of film damage effects; works within Final Cut Pro
■ Cons	Slow rendering; sluggish performance
■ OS X	Only
■ RRP	\$US299
■ Publisher	Red Giant Software
■ Distributor	Available online
■ Reviewer	Robert Ellis
■ Hot links	www.redgiantsoftware.com

Magic Bullet Editors 1.0

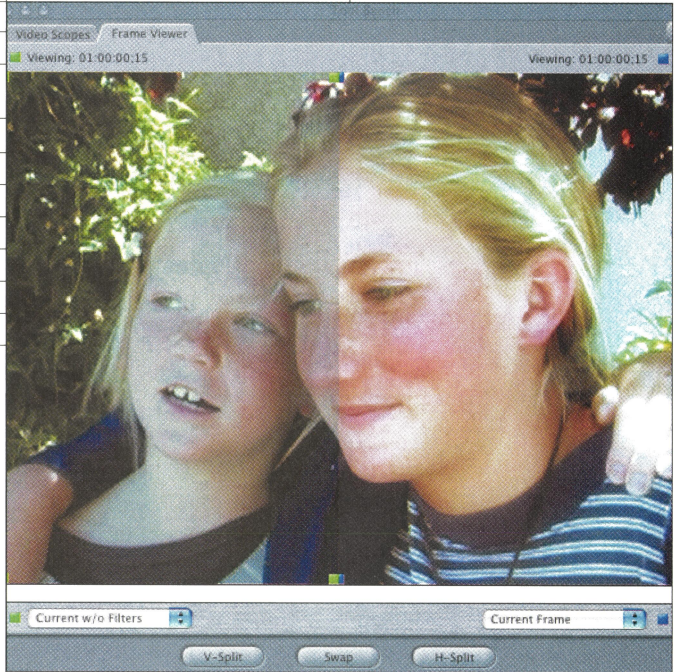
Magical film effects

IF you want to impart a film-like quality to your digital video, Red Giant Software's Magic Bullet Editors, a special-effects plug-in for Final Cut Pro, may help you realise your vision.

Magic Bullet Editors includes Look Suite, the colour-correction controls of its After Effects sibling, Magic Bullet Suite, and it includes Misfire, a new tool for creating realistic film-damage effects. These effects are impressive, but rendering times are painfully slow.

Look Suite offers controls that let you create film "looks" like those seen in popular movies. Drop a preset on your clip, and instantly you've got anything from the soft, colourful look of *Amelie* to the bleached, contrasty look of *Saving Private Ryan*. There are 50 preset looks, including basic effects (such as Warm and Cool) and presets that emulate the look of your favourite film. Look Suite lets you tweak the look of your footage endlessly. Twenty-five controls let you prep your video, emulate lens filters and various film stocks, and balance the final image. All controls are keyframable, so you can vary the effects over time. You can select and deselect individual sections to isolate the effects.

Misfire helps you rough up your video to create an aged look. There are 13 Misfire filters, including Dust, Grain, Scratches (basic, micro, and deep), Splotches, and Vignette. Misfire can also simulate projection artifacts such as flicker and gate weave, the distinctive side-to-side shakiness of ancient flicks.



Looks sweet. The right half of this video has been treated with the Warm & Fuzzy effect, one of 50 presets included with Look Suite.

While you can approximate some of these effects with Final Cut Pro's built-in filters, Magic Bullet Editors offers finer control and richer, more professional-looking results. You'll need a fast Mac though. On my dual-800MHz G4 with 1.25GB of RAM, rendering a 30-second clip took more than 15 minutes. Adding Misfire prolonged rendering. Fortunately, unlike with Look Suite, you can apply Misfire as a single filter or apply each effect as an individual filter; this minimises the performance hit. Red Giant says that the tools are accelerated for the G5, and that performance and rendering times should be substantially faster on a G5 than on older hardware.

Australian Macworld's buying advice. Magic Bullet Editors 1.0 is the perfect tool for achieving a stylish film look or an authentic-looking "classic." Just make sure your hardware is up for some heavy lifting. 🍷

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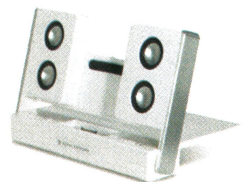
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■ Type	Animation software
■ Rating	👍👍👍 1/2
■ Pros	Excellent value; outstanding drawing, painting, animation, and multi-plane camera tools; easy cycle creation; audio scrubbing; drawing tools available in Sceneplanning mode
■ Cons	No type tool; no vectorisation preview; no printed full manual
■ OS X	Only
■ RRP	\$680
■ Publisher	Toon Boom Animation
■ Distributor	Adimex 02 9699 1088
■ Reviewer	Galen Fott
■ Hot links	www.toonboom.com

Toon Boom Studio 2.5

New tools for 'toons

THANKS to the runaway success of 3D computer-animated feature films, led by Pixar (Steve Jobs's other company), traditional, hand-drawn animation is in a slump. Animation studios are tossing aside their pencils to jump on the 3D bandwagon, abandoning the art form that started it all. Toon Boom Studio 2.5 could be just the thing to turn that slump around.

The previous version of Toon Boom was nothing less than a full-fledged animation studio. It let users draw, ink, paint, assemble a soundtrack, and use a multi-plane camera to frame and record their shots. This long-awaited new release adds several important tools and capabilities into the mix. With so much animation power readily available at such a reasonable price, independent artists have the means to create the next – well, 'toon boom.

Draw a little closer. If you're handy with a Wacom pen and tablet, the easiest way to get started with Toon Boom Studio is to use the program's Drawing mode to sketch. The pressure-sensitive Brush tool gives you variable line widths, and there are simple shape-drawing tools. The Polyline tool, a new element in the toolbox, is great for users who are comfortable with an Adobe Illustrator-style Bézier pen. (You can also import art directly from Illustrator CS.) This version's toolbox has only one significant omission: a type tool for generating titles.

All of Toon Boom's tools draw in vectors, rather than pixels, and you can export images to the Macromedia Flash .swf format. The new Smooth command reduces the number of points in vector lines, lowering the .swf file size. If you'd rather draw on paper, the Import And Vectorize command now lets you scan your drawings directly into the program and convert them to vector images on-the-fly. While this saves time and disk space, guessing the correct vectorisation filter settings before you scan can be tricky; a preview would be helpful.

You can also scan drawings without converting them to vector images, but then you miss out on Toon Boom's dynamic

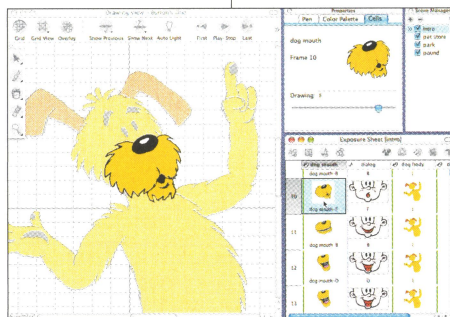
colouring tools. Just click inside a drawn shape to fill it with the selected colour. If your drawing style is sketchy and your shapes aren't always perfectly closed, the new, adjustable Auto Gap setting ignores small gaps so the shape fills properly. If you're careful to name your swatches correctly – name the swatch for the object you're colouring ("tutu" instead of "yellow") – it's a snap to go back and make changes globally if you decide your hippo ballerina would be prettier in pink.

Toon Boom's Exposure Sheet lets you plan the timing of your individual art elements. Among the program's most welcome new features are the Create Cycle commands, which eliminate the old version's reliance on tedious cutting and pasting to create sequences of repeating drawings, such as walk cycles.

Vocal sync. The previous version of Toon Boom could analyse a dialogue track and generate a lip-sync chart for you to refer to as you animated your character's mouth. Version 2.5 goes a step further: If you draw a stationary character's mouth shapes in advance, the

program can place those shapes according to a soundtrack analysis and create an instant lip sync. The results probably wouldn't satisfy Uncle Walt, but this feature is great for limited TV-style animation.

As you refine your synchronisation, the Sound Element Editor's new audio scrubbing is absolutely vital; it lets you closely analyse the audio so you can make your own adjustments.



Speak, Boy! Toon Boom Studio's automatic lip-sync feature can get lips flapping in no time.

Scenic design. Toon Boom's Sceneplanning mode – where you gather various art elements to animate them on a virtual 3D stage – has been updated in version 2.5. Audio scrubbing is available here, too, so you can synchronize the broader movements of your animation to the soundtrack. And you can create dynamic multi-plane effects of depth and perspective by animating your camera, zooming past foreground elements, and moving in for a close-up.

The most welcome change to the Sceneplanning mode is that you can draw in it. Before, this mode often revealed problems with your animation that could be fixed only in Drawing mode. In this version, you can just pick up a drawing tool and touch up your art at any time in the process.

Toon Boom Studio 2.5 can export to QuickTime, in addition to Flash. You can easily drop your animated scene into an iMovie project, or you can render a movie, complete with alpha channel, to composite in a program such as Apple's Final Cut Express. The program comes with a 100-page Getting Started book, but, unfortunately, the 450-page printed manual has been replaced with a PDF file.

Australian Macworld's buying advice. Toon Boom Studio 2.5 is a fantastic, reasonably priced program that gives you almost every tool you need in order to produce hand-drawn animated cartoons on a Mac. For previous owners, this version has a cavalcade of new features that make it an essential upgrade. For new users who can draw reasonably well and who want to animate, passing this program up would be downright goofy. 🐼

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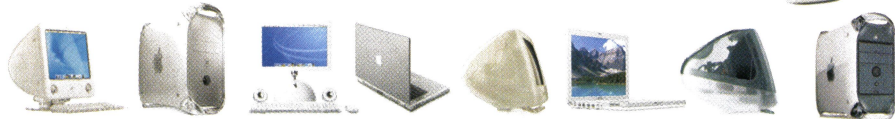
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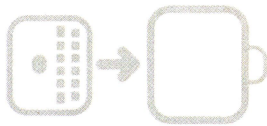
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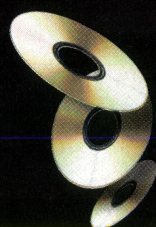
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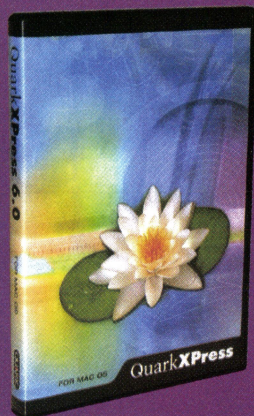


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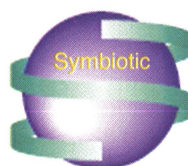
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Something to chew on.

By Alex Rieneck.

It needs to be said. Again.

RECENTLY did something that I imagine that the people at Apple do quite regularly. I went to the web site of a purveyor of Wintel boxes (see "Hot links") and used their configurator order thingy to make up a computer. I clicked and clucked and after awhile I had created a machine that would be perfectly adequate for surfing the net, typing the odd ransom note, and generally puttering through those activities that were completely non-existent only a few short years ago.

The machine that I made was built around a Celeron 2.4GHz processor and had, very roughly, the same sort of specs that a standard eMac has — and by that I mean roughly equivalent performance, in a real world way.

As far as this is last is concerned you will have to take my word for it. There really isn't that much to choose between thousand-buck computers. The market has seen to that. G4 or Celeron, a thousand-buck computer is a solid home-based performer that does not do games that well. This Celeron box that I created came in at 938 dollars, and that is of course about the price that you would see emblazoned large across any newspaper Australia-wide. Scary. The cheapest eMac is about 300 bucks more expensive than that.

Of course, this more affordable computer box would only really do one thing. Specifically, it would whirr and occasionally beep until it got an operating system stuck into it. Windows XP Home costs \$171. I can just picture the look on my face when the sales bot sprung that one on me if I wasn't expecting it. Still, \$1109 is still cheaper than \$1300 for the most affordable eMac. Well, is it?

The day that I wrote this, Windows XP SP2 was released on the world with about as much fanfare as the arrival of an alien pleasure planet in low Earth orbit. Two Hundred and Sixty Six Megabytes of Redmond Goodness suddenly awaited the faithful for download! The blatherings! The orgy of opinion! Close examination showed (of course) that the long-overdue operating system patch was delivering functionality that looked rather like the paper that the fish and chips came in the Christmas before last.

"Pop up ads blocked". How sad is that? The last time I saw a pop up was probably in an internet café.

"Firewall on by default". Yay. A small fence between the lemmings and the sea. What a good idea. Still, it can't hurt.

"Web and e-mail clients warn that attachments are most probably viruses or malware". Just in case the user hasn't seen any media at all in the last, what, four years?



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"Users regularly reminded about updates". That should help. Most users (if reminded) will gladly forgo several days of porn digging to download hundred-meg system patches over their 56Kb modem. It's just that they forget.

"Protection against buffer overruns". Yeah. Right. That statement alone has all the hallmarks of becoming a new ghost for the Microsoft family closet complete with clanking chains and echoing laugh. Who are they trying to kid?

And last, my personal favourite: "Windows Messenger Service turned off by default". If I had my way, that would be "Windows Messenger Service doused in consecrated gasoline and burned at the stake," but there you go. The nature of the patch defines the nature of the operating system, as surely as the strength of the smell defines the location of the cat's business.

On the operating system front alone the eMac is a far, far better deal. When you add in the fact that the eMac comes with iMovie and a whole bunch of other stuff (which actually works out of the box), the Wintel box (surprise, surprise) looks way overpriced and shoddy by comparison.

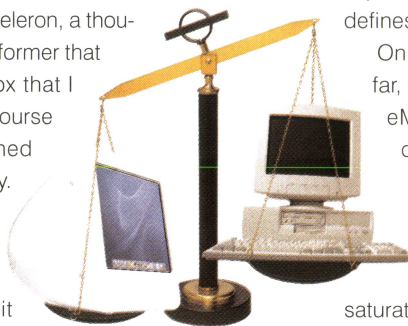
The problem, though, is that the belief that Apple products are expensive has reached such saturation levels in people's minds that nothing is liable to shake it. On one hand, the media fosters the idea that a Windows box is the only sort of "real" computer, and on the other Apple's advertising stresses quality rather than affordability. After all, it has to.

When accused of being crap, replying that you are actually high quality but that you are cheap will just get you a bus ticket out of business. The Apple "perceived value" attitude is therefore a defensive state as far as the market is concerned, and one that will probably have to be maintained until the Windows monopoly finally collapses under the weight of its own gimcrackery.

I can remember in the lead up to an election years (and years) ago, seeing a pamphlet that listed the failings of the incumbent party. Among other things, in the years prior there had been a huge series of electricity blackouts. I was much too young to vote but I can remember thinking "Jeez, these guys have had it". In the last week or so before the election, the government unveiled the XPT. A pointy-looking train. Which was great. They were re-elected.

Windows Longhorn rolls out mid-2005, I believe. ☹

Alex Rieneck has been a technology commentator since the days of the bone abacus.



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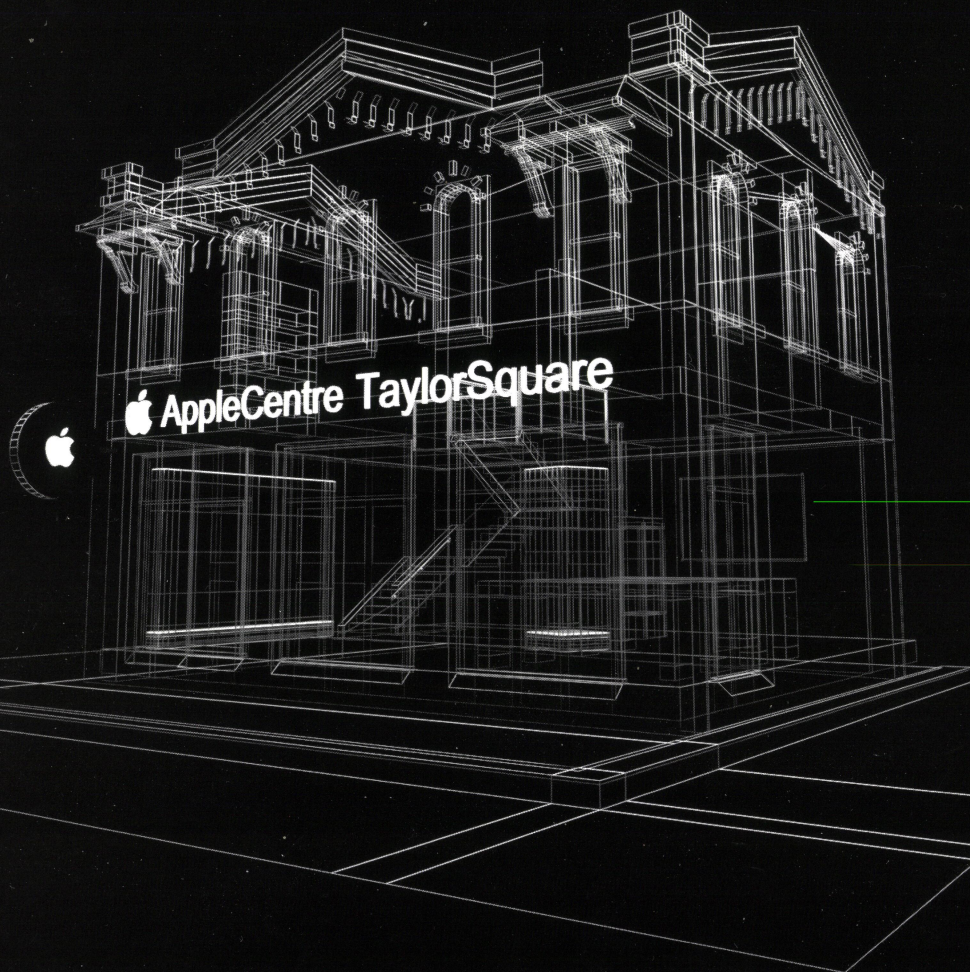
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